# Heidegger Reexamined

Edited with introductions by

Hubert Dreyfus
*University of California, Berkeley*
Mark Wrathall
*Brigham Young University*

A ROUTLEDGE SERIES

## Contents of the Collection

Volume 1
Dasein, Authenticity, and Death

Volume 2
Truth, Realism, and the History of Being

Volume 3
Art, Poetry, and Technology

Volume 4
Language and the Critique of Subjectivity

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Volume 1

# Dasein, Authenticity, and Death

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# Contents

vii Series Introduction
xi Volume Introduction

1 The Young Heidegger and Phenomenology
*John van Buren*

35 Dasein, the Being that Thematizes
*Robert R. Brandom*

73 Heidegger on Being a Person
*John Haugeland*

85 Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?
*David R. Cerbone*

107 Being and the Living
*Didier Franck*

121 Intentionality and the Semantics of 'Dasein'
*Roderick M. Stewart*

135 Heidegger's Critique of the Husserl/Searle Account of Intentionality
*Hubert L. Dreyfus*

157 *Geschlecht*: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference
*Jacques Derrida*

177 Existence and Self-Understanding in *Being and Time*
*William D. Blattner*

191 Heidegger's "Authenticity" Revisited
*Charles B. Guignon*

211 Individual and Community in Early Heidegger: Situating *das Man*, the Man-Self, and Self-ownership in Dasein's Ontological Structure
*Edgar C. Boedeker, Jr.*

248 Heidegger on the Relation of Oneself to Oneself: Choosing Oneself
*Ernst Tugendhat*

267 Heidegger and the Sources of Intelligibility
*Pierre Keller and David S. Weberman*

285 Social Constraints on Conversational Content: Heidegger on *Rede* and *Gerede*
*Mark A. Wrathall*

307 The Concept of Death in *Being and Time*
*William D. Blattner*

330 Dasein, Existence, and Death
*Carol J. White*

345 Metaphysics, Metontology, and the End of *Being and Time*
*Steven Galt Crowell*

371 Acknowledgments

# Series Introduction

Martin Heidegger is undeniably one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. His work has been appropriated by scholars in fields as diverse as philosophy, classics, psychology, literature, history, sociology, anthropology, political science, religious studies, and cultural studies.

In this four-volume series, we've collected a set of articles that we believe represent some of the best research on the most interesting and difficult issues in contemporary Heidegger scholarship. In putting together this collection, we have quite deliberately tried to identify the papers that engage critically with Heidegger's thought. This is not just because we wanted to focus on "live" issues in Heidegger scholarship. It is also because critical engagement with the text is, in our opinion, the best way to grasp Heidegger's thought. Heidegger is a notoriously difficult read—in part, because he is deliberately trying to break with the philosophical tradition, in part, because his way of breaking with the tradition was often to coin neologisms (a less sympathetic reader might dismiss it as obfuscatory jargon), and, in part, because Heidegger believed his task was to provoke his readers to thoughtfulness rather than provide them with a facile answer to a well-defined problem. Because of the difficulties in reading Heidegger, however, we believe that it is incumbent upon the commentator to keep the matter for thought in the forefront—the issue that Heidegger is trying to shed light on. Without such an engagement in the matter for thought, Heidegger scholarship all too often devolves into empty word play.

So, the first and most important criterion we've used in selecting papers is that they engage with important issues in Heidegger's thought, and do so in a clear, non-obfuscatory fashion. Next, we have by and large avoided republishing articles that are already available in other collections of essays on Heidegger. We have made exceptions, however, particularly when the essay is located in a volume that would easily be overlooked by Heidegger scholars. Finally, as our primary intent was to collect and make readily available work on current issues and problems arising out of Heidegger's thought, we have tried to select recent rather than dated articles.

In selecting themes for each volume, we have, in general, been guided by the order in which Heidegger, over the course of his career, devoted extended attention to the problems involved. Thus, the first volume con-

tains essays focusing on Dasein—the human mode of existence—and "existential" themes like authenticity and death, because these were prominent concerns in the years leading up to and immediately following the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927. The second volume centers on Heidegger's account of truth, and his critique of the history of philosophy, because these were areas of extended interest in the 1930s and 1940s. The third volume is organized around themes indigenous to the 'late' Heidegger—namely, Heidegger's work on art, poetry, and technology.

But this is not to say that the volumes are governed by a strict notion of periods in Heidegger's work. In the past, it has been commonplace to subdivide Heidegger's work into two (early and late) or even three (early, middle, and late) periods. While there is something to be said for such divisions—there is an obvious sense in which *Being and Time* is thematically and stylistically unlike Heidegger's publications following the Second World War—it is also misleading to speak as if there were two or three different Heideggers. The bifurcation, as is well known, is something that Heidegger himself was uneasy about[1], and scholars today are increasingly hesitant to draw too sharp a divide between the early and late. So while the themes of the first three volumes have been set by Heidegger's own historical course through philosophy, the distribution of papers into volumes does not respect a division of scholarship into early and late. We have found instead that the papers relevant to an 'early Heidegger' issue often draw on Heidegger's later work, and vice versa.

The last volume in the series is organized less by Heidegger's own thematic concerns than by an interest in Heidegger's relevance to contemporary philosophy. Given mainstream analytic philosophy's preoccupation with language and mind, however, this volume does have two thematic centers of gravity—Heidegger's work on the essence of language, and his critique of modernist accounts of subjectivity.

In its focus on Heidegger's relevance to ongoing philosophical concerns, however, volume four merely makes obvious the intention of the series as a whole. In his 1925–26 lecture course on logic, Heidegger bemoaned the fact that people "no longer philosophize from the issues, but from their colleague's books."[2] In a similar way, we believe that Heidegger is deserving of attention as a philosopher only because he is such an excellent guide to the issues themselves. We hope that the papers we have collected here demonstrate Heidegger's continuing pertinence to the most pressing issues in contemporary philosophy.

## NOTES

[1] Writing to Richardson, Heidegger noted: "The distinction you make between Heidegger I and II is justified only on the condition that this is kept constantly in mind: only by way of what [Heidegger] I has thought does one gain access to what is to-be-thought by [Heidegger] II. But the thought of [Heidegger] I becomes possible only if it is contained in [Heidegger] II." William J. Richardson, "Letter to Richardson," in *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1963), 8.

[2] *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, Gesamtausgabe* 21 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 84.

# Volume Introduction

Heidegger's *Being and Time* was published in 1927 and remains one of the most influential philosophical works of the past century. In it, Heidegger undertakes an ambitious ontological project—the central task of the book is to discover the meaning of being—on the basis of a subtle and revolutionary phenomenology of the human mode of existence.

The articles collected in this volume focus on some of the most vexing problems that grow out of Heidegger's account of human existence. In order to set up these papers, we would like to offer a brief introduction to Heidegger's way of doing philosophy, his account of human existence, and the concerns with authenticity and death that grow out of that account.

Heidegger's early philosophy was profoundly shaped by his study of the phenomenological works of Husserl, Dilthey and, to a lesser degree, Scheler. But Heidegger broke very early on with any formal "phenomenological method" and eventually dropped the term 'phenomenology' as a self-description, worried that representing his thought as phenomenology would cause him to be associated with Husserl's substantive philosophical views. With the ongoing publication of Heidegger's *Collected Works*, it has become possible to document the formative influence of phenomenology on Heidegger (see John van Buren's paper), as well as his eventual break with phenomenology. On the latter point, see Steve Crowell's paper, which explores Heidegger's struggle with the limitations of phenomenology as a method for metaphysical inquiry, and his move beyond Husserlian phenomenology in the decade following the publication of *Being and Time*.

Despite his break with the phenomenological movement, Heidegger considered his work throughout his life to be "a more faithful adherence to the principle of phenomenology"[1] (in his own loose sense of the term). For Heidegger, phenomenology is an 'attitude' or practice in 'seeing' that takes its departure from lived experience. It aims at grasping the phenomena of lived involvement in the world, before our understanding of the world becomes determined and altered in 'thematic' or reflective thought. In this respect, Heidegger's work is in marked contrast to the method of conceptual analysis that has come to dominate philosophy in the English-speaking world following the "linguistic turn" of the early twentieth century. For Heidegger, our concepts and language come too late, and have a different structure than our pre-propositional way of comporting in the world. It is

thus not possible to discover the most fundamental features of human existence through an analysis of language and concepts.[2]

The core of *Being and Time* is an analysis of the human mode of being, which Heidegger names with the term 'Dasein.' Dasein means existence in colloquial German, but Heidegger used it as a term to refer to the peculiarly human way of existing (without, of course, deciding in advance whether only humans exist in this way). Translators of Heidegger have elected to leave the term untranslated, and so it has now passed into common parlance among Heidegger scholars.

One of the distinguishing features of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein is the priority he discovers in non-cognitive modes of being-in-the-world. The propositional intentional states that the philosophical tradition has seen as constitutive of Dasein are, in Heidegger's analysis, derivative phenomena. Hubert Dreyfus's article, "Heidegger's Critique of the Husserl/Searle Account of Intentionality," explains Heidegger's practice-based account of being-in-the-world, and explores the implications of Heidegger's radical rethinking of human being for mainstream accounts of the mind-world relationship. John Haugeland offers a defense of the idea that human existence can be understood as primarily practical in nature. This view of human existence, for Haugeland, underwrites a radical departure from the Kantian/Cartesian tradition of thinking about personhood. As a result, Haugeland argues, Dasein should be understood as a pattern of norms (and the institutions and meanings that are based in such norms). Other interpreters of Heidegger, however, argue that while Heidegger's analysis certainly emphasizes non-cognitive states, language and cognition nevertheless play a crucial role in the constitution of Dasein. In "Intentionality and the Semantics of Dasein," for instance, John Stewart argues that Haugeland's and Dreyfus's readings of Dasein underemphasize deliberation and other thematic states. Robert Brandom similarly argues that language is essential to Dasein's being. Criticizing "layer-cake" models of language—that is, theories in which language can simply be added on to an already human but non-linguistic entity—Brandom argues that a pre-linguistic community would not count as Dasein for Heidegger.

Other significant issues remain surrounding the nature and constitution of Dasein. A central aim of *Being and Time* is to demonstrate that Dasein is a mode of existence distinct from that enjoyed by objects in the world, and that it cannot be reduced to or grounded in the mode of being of objects. Instead, Dasein is essentially always in a world, which, in turn, is always organized meaningfully. Within the world, Dasein encounters other Daseins, and also other objects with modes of being different from Dasein. The other principal modes of being that Heidegger discusses in *Being and Time* are the 'available' (or 'ready-to-hand') and the 'occurrent' (or 'present-at-hand'). Equipment is paradigmatic of the available.



Something is available when (1) it is defined in terms of its place in a context of equipment, typical activities in which it is used, and typical purposes or goals with which it is used, and (2) it lends itself to such use readily and easily, without need for reflection. The core case of availableness is an item of equipment of which we have a primordial understanding (i.e., we know how to use it), and which transparently lends itself to use.

The other primary mode of being is 'occurrentness' or 'presence-at-hand.' This is the mode of being of things which are not given a worldly determination—that is, things constituted by properties they possess in themselves, rather than through their relations to uses and objects of use. Most available things can also be viewed as occurrent, and in breakdown situations, the occurrentness of an available object will obtrude. An important theme in *Being and Time* is Heidegger's argument that traditional philosophies and sciences have taken the occurrent as primordial, and consequently failed to properly understand the nature of the available. More importantly, Heidegger argues that the tradition has also tried to interpret Dasein on the model of occurrent entities. According to Heidegger, there is no way to reduce the meaningfulness of the world or being-in-the-world to a collection of occurrent entities with occurrent properties.

A key element in Heidegger's argument is the distinction between the ontic and ontological. *Being and Time* is concerned with the meaning of being—that on the basis of which being is understood. Heidegger argues that traditional treatments of being have failed to adequately distinguish the two kinds of questions we can ask about being: the ontic question that asks about the properties of beings, and the ontological question that asks about ways or modes of being. Dasein, the available, and the occurrent are ontological categories. If one ontologically investigates an item of equipment, say, a pen, then one asks about the structures by virtue of which it is available or ready to hand. In an ontic inquiry, on the other hand, one asks about the properties, and the physical and relational structures peculiar to the pen. Heidegger's critique of the tradition comes from the simple observation that an ontic inquiry, no matter how exhaustive, cannot tell anything about the ontological mode of being of a thing. This is because a listing of a pen's properties cannot tell me why it is available rather than occurrent.

One outcome of Heidegger's ontological investigation of Dasein is the claim that certain features of human existence are merely ontic properties—things like sexuality and other features of our embodiment, for instance—and play no role in the ontological constitution of Dasein. In "*Geschlecht*," Derrida questions this outcome, and uses it to explore the validity of the ontic/ontological distinction. Derrida, too, is concerned with the difference between existentiell and existential features. He questions Heidegger's readiness to treat things like sexual characteristics as ontic.

Similar concerns are raised by an "ontic" feature of human existence like being embodied (see David Cerbone's "Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature': What is the Hidden Problematic?") or being alive (See Didier Franck's "Being and the Living").

The role of language in Dasein's constitution—a topic we've already touched on—is directly connected with the "existential" themes of *Being and Time*. It is sometimes supposed that the source of Dasein's tendency toward inauthenticity is the inherent banality and levelling of public language. Drawing on analytic work in the philosophy of language, Mark Wrathall argues that this view is not supportable on the basis of Heidegger's views of language. Even if Dasein's use of language is not directly responsible for the fall into inauthenticity, it is still possible that it plays a role in it. The problem can be posed in terms of the following paradox: to fail to acknowledge a constitutive role for language and public practices threatens to lead to solipsism; to give them too strong a role, on the other hand, would entail that there is no higher intelligibility than everyday intelligibility. Heidegger, however, both denies that his view is solipsistic, and, through his views on authenticity and his critique of the banality of *das Man* (the source of public intelligibility), suggests that there is a higher sort of intelligibility uncovered in authenticity. We've included four articles that struggle with the relationship between Dasein's inauthenticity and its beholdenness to public sources of intelligibility: "Heidegger and the Sources of Intelligibility," by Pierre Keller and David Weberman, E. C. Boedeker's "Individual and Community in Early Heidegger," Ernst Tugendhat's "Heidegger on the Relation of Oneself to Oneself," and Charles Guignon's "Heidegger's 'Authenticity' Revisited."

The possibility of authentic self-determination arises from the fact that, unlike occurrent entities, the way that Dasein takes up its residence in the world is not fixed or necessitated. That is to say, the relationships that Dasein enjoys with other things, and the significance that other things hold for Dasein, are contingent and always subject to change. Heidegger makes this point by saying that for Dasein, "in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it."[3] Another way of developing this point, however, points out the paradoxicality of Heidegger's account from the account of the philosophical tradition: "The essence of Dasein," Heidegger claims, "is its existence." In "Existence and Self-Understanding in *Being and Time*," William Blattner helps dissolve the paradox by unfolding Heidegger's notion of Dasein's existence in terms of Dasein's self-interpretive abilities. This means that Dasein, unlike mere objects, is always open to existing in different ways.

A consequence of this is that any particular way of existing in the world is necessarily fundamentally ungrounded—"it is the null basis of its own nullity."[4] This is a disquieting fact, and one that Dasein disguises from



itself—primarily by taking up societal norms as if they somehow revealed the truth about how one should live. But anxiety in the face of death, Heidegger argues, if faced up to, can open the door to an authentic existence: "Anxiety," Heidegger explains, "liberates one from possibilities which 'count for nothing', and lets one become free-for those which are authentic."[5]

Although there can be no question that death plays a central role in the architectonic of *Being and Time*, certain features of Heidegger's account of death make it unclear what exactly it is that 'death' refers to. Heidegger is emphatic that he doesn't mean a mere organic demise[6]—this in itself is enough to raise questions about the death he has in mind, for surely 'death,' at least in ordinary uses of the term, has organic demise as an integral part. And Heidegger is clear that death is a condition in which Dasein is unable to be.[7] At the same time, Heidegger claims that death, as "the possibility of the impossibility of existence in general"[8] is a way of being of Dasein. We have included two different efforts at reconciling Heidegger's various comments on death—Carol White's "Dasein, Existence and Death," and William Blattner's "The Concept of Death in Being and Time."

## NOTES

[1]In William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1963), 4. See also "My Way to Phenomenology," in Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 74–82.

[2]For an examination of the relevance of Heidegger's work to contemporary analytic philosophy, see the essays in volume four of this collection.

[3]*Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 32.

[4]Ibid., 354.

[5]Ibid., 395.

[6]Ibid., 291, 295.

[7]Ibid., 307.

[8]Ibid.

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# The young Heidegger and phenomenology

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> Ways of thinking – for which the past (*Vergangenes*) remains indeed what has past, but for which what has been (*Gewesendes*) persists in coming – wait until at some time thinking goes along them. (*VA*, 7)[1]

## 1. Introduction

In his *Being and Time*, which appeared in the 1927 issue of Husserl's *Jahrbuch*, Heidegger stated that the "basis" of his work had been prepared for by Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. (*SZ*, 51/62) He also indicated that *Being and Time* was the result of a long period of phenomenological apprenticeship and development. (*SZ*, 97, n. 1/102, n. i; 356, n. 3/313, n. iii) The recent publication of many of his youthful lecture courses[2] before *Being and Time* now allows us to follow up these indications, which he himself left for the most part unexplained both at the time and afterwards. I would thus like to present a re-constructive reading of his youthful phenomenological apprenticeship between the years 1919 and 1926. More specifically, I want to argue, first, that his youthful, phenomenological *Denkweg* in the early twenties is a unique period in his development and thus cannot be absorbed into either his *Being and Time* or his later writings, as he himself and others have attempted to do; second, I want to argue further that the young Heidegger had already worked out the themes of the "question of being," the "turn," the "end of philosophy," and the "other beginning," of which the last-mentioned are often thought to belong exclusively to his later period after 1930; and, most importantly, I want to show, without neglecting the other decisive influences on his youthful thought, how exactly it was, then, that he originally worked out his question of being through a critical appropriation of Husserl's phenomenol-

ogy and especially the sixth investigation in his *Logical Investigations* on the "categorial intuition" of "being." On the whole, I wish to show that, in allowing us to see all this, his youthful lecture courses offer a new and more adequate way of reading and appropriating his entire thought.

Let us begin with an exploration of the general "hermeneutical situation" within which the young Heidegger was interpreting Husserl's phenomenology.

## 2. The hermeneutical situation

The young Heidegger's preoccupation with Husserl's phenomenology went, in fact, as far back as his earliest published essays (1912–1916), his doctoral dissertation (1914), and his habilitation writing (1916). (*FS*)[3] It was only financial reasons that had prevented him from going to Göttingen to do his doctoral and habilitation work under Husserl, instead of staying in Freiburg under the Neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert.[4] In his earliest student writings, he used Husserl's phenomenology, along with contemporary Neo-Kantianism, to pursue "pure logic," the "doctrine of judgment," "a priori grammar," the "doctrine of categories," and also the "division of the entire field of 'being' into its various modes of reality." (*FS*, 186) He later called this use of phenomenology a metaphysical "ontologic." (*FS*, 55) In the conclusion to his habilitation writing on Duns Scotus, which also drew on Meister Eckhardt, German Idealism (especially Hegel) and Romanticism (Novalis, Schlegel), and the contemporary Neo-Hegelian theology of Carl Braig, he used Husserl's phenomenology in a speculative, religious "metaphysics," whose "genuine optic" was "the true reality and the real truth" of the "absolute spirit of God." (*FS*, 399–411) Here he was appropriating phenomenology in the context of what he would later call "ontotheology," i.e., the account of being as a divine ground. In spite of a few intimations of what we today know of as his "question of being," his early student writings from 1912 to 1916 and his use of Husserl's phenomenology in them remained caught up within metaphysics.

In 1916 Husserl took up the chair of philosophy in Freiburg. But due to Heidegger's absence from the university in 1917 and 1918 because of his war service, it was not until 1919 that he really "met Husserl in his workshop" (*SD*, 85/78) and a close working relationship between them developed.[5] By that time Heidegger had disassociated himself from both





his Neo-Kantian teacher Heinrich Rickert and his Catholic-philosophical affiliations. (*BK*, 541) He became Husserl's assistant (1919–23), his "favorite student,"[6] and the "phenomenological child."[7] During this time, Husserl often said: "You and I are phenomenology."[8] In turn, Heidegger wrote in 1923 that "Husserl gave me my eyes." (*HF*, 5) Because of his close identification with phenomenology, the 1920s have been called his "phenomenological decade,"[9] even though he ascribed to phenomenology both before this period in his student writings and after this period in his later writings, although in different ways. The titles to roughly half of his lecture courses and seminars during this period contain some form of the word "phenomenology" ("Phenomenological Exercises in ...," "Phenomenological Interpretations of...", etc.).[10] Although his thought during this period certainly would not have been possible without his dialogues with other traditions, especially Aristotle and Christian authors, his philosophical lexicon is, as we shall see, primarily a phenomenological one.

His new preoccupation with Husserl's phenomenology after 1919 was not an uncritical appropriation of it, as had been the case for the most part in his doctoral dissertation and habilitation writing. He was now very much concerned with carrying out a "destruction" of Husserl's primarily logical self-understanding of his fundamental notion of "intentionality" by tracing it back into the concreteness and historicity of "factical life." Indeed, as early as 1910, he had written the following marginal note beside Husserl's sentence in his "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science" "Not from philosophies but from issues (*Sachen*) and problems must the impulse to research proceed": "We will take Husserl at his word."[11] His habilitation writing had hinted at the necessity of pushing Husserl's "pure logic" in the direction of a "philosophy oriented to world-view." (*FS*, 205, n. 10) In 1917, he wrote to the medievalist Martin Grabmann that his most immediate plans involved a "confrontation with value-philosophy and phenomenology *from the inside out*." (*BG*, 104) Indeed, we find him carrying out this critique in detail in his first lecture course of 1919. (*IP*) In his 1925 lecture course, he presented what eventually became "Division One" and the first third of "Division Two" of *Being and Time* as a "fundamental critique of phenomenological inquiry." (*GZ*, 420/304, 192/141–2) As we shall see, he also launced this critique in other lecture courses in the early twenties.[12] It was not really until 1919 and the years following that his earlier suspicions about Husserl's philosophy were given actual expression in a full-scale critique. The later Heidegger could thus report that at this time he was engaged in a phenomenological battle

of the giants with Husserl about *die Sache selbst*, the "thing" or "topic itself" of phenomenology. "Is it consciousness and its objectivity," he asked himself, "or is it the being of beings in its unconcealment and concealing?" (*SD*, 87/79, 47/44)[13] His statement in *Being and Time* that Husserl's *Logical Investigations* laid the "basis" for this work must, therefore, be understood in reference not to his first naive appropriation of Husserl's text in his early student writings, but rather to his subsequent, very critical appropriation beginning around 1919.

In the logical concerns of his doctoral dissertation and his habilitation writing, he had relied on Husserl's *Ideas* and especially on the first volume of his *Logical Investigations* in which Husserl develops his idea of an anti-psychologistic "pure logic." But his new retrieval of Husserl's work after 1919 turned toward the sixth investigation in the second volume. He reported later that in the early twenties he "worked on the *Logical Investigations* every week in special study groups with advanced students." (*SD*, 87/79)[14] Even though at that time the "master no longer held his work in very high esteem," Heidegger, so we are told, had his "own reasons to prefer the *Logical Investigations* for the purposes of an introduction to phenomenology." (*US*, 86/5) Indeed, in his 1925 lecture course, we find him boldly declaring that Husserl's early *Logical Investigations*, and not any of his later "transcendental" works, is the "*fundamental book of phenomenology*." (*GZ*, 30/24) He came to see Husserl's later "transcendental" self-understanding" (*GZ*, 188/139, 124/91) of his earlier, "philosophically neutral" (*SD*, 84/77) *Logical Investigations* as a "fall" (*GZ*, 179/129) into metaphysical prejudices, especially those of Descartes, Fichte, and Neo-Kantianism (*SD*, 47/44, 84/77; *BR*, xiv/xv).

What interested the young Heidegger in Husserl's sixth investigation was his description of the "acts of consciousness" in knowing and especially the specific acts of "categorial intuition" in which "being" is "given" as an object of consciousness. Thus, in his key discussions of truth and time in his *Being and Time*, he could refer the reader to Husserl's sixth investigation.[15] In 1973, he held a seminar on the influence of Husserl's sixth investigation on his youthful thought (*S*, 372–400) and briefly sketched out what he had meant by his earlier statement in *Being and Time* that Husserl's *Logical Investigations* had provided the "basis" (*S*, 378) for his work. In Husserl's notion of the "categorial intuition" of being, he had seen, we are told, the "essential discovery" and "burning point of Husserl's thinking," since it was here that Husserl "brushed against the question of being." (*S*, 373, 376) Husserl's notion of





"categorial intuition" became an "essential spring-board" (*Triebfeder*) for the young Heidegger's own project of re-thinking the question of being. (*S*, 377) In his 1963 essay "My Way in Phenomenology," he wrote:

> As I myself after 1919, teaching and learning in Husserl's proximity, practiced phenomenological seeing ... my interest leaned anew toward the *Logical Investigations*, above all the sixth investigation in the first edition. The distinction which is worked out there between sensuous and categorial intuition revealed itself to me in its scope for the determination of the "manifold meaning of being." (*SD*, 86/78, 47/44; cf. *BR*, xi/x)

We do indeed find that in his 1925 lecture course, one of many first drafts of his *Being and Time*, Heidegger presented what eventually became "Division One" and the first third of "Division Two" of *Being and Time* as a "retrieval," an "immanent critique" of Husserl's sixth investigation, which was the focal point of his almost two hundred page introductory discussion of Husserl's phenomenology. (*GZ*, 32/26, 192/141–142, 420/303, 124/91)[16] In his 1925–26 lecture course (*LW*), still another early draft of his *Being and Time* (primarily what became Division Two, "Dasein and Temporality"), his discussion of human existence and temporality was preceded by an almost one hundred page discussion of Husserl's notion of "truth." In other lecture courses he held between 1919 and 1926, one also finds, as we shall see, discussions and appropriations of the basic concepts of Husserl's phenomenology.

The young Heidegger saw Husserl's *Logical Investigations* as "formal indication" or "hermeneutical concepts" (*GZ*, 58/44, 109/79) which pointed interpretively to "the things themselves" and were to be critically appropriated in light of a renewed showing of these "things" as the ultimate criterion of phenomenological research. (*IP*, 109; *PA*, 191; *GZ*, 103/75) "Phenomenology," he maintained, "is *unphenomenological*!" (*GZ*, 178/128) He thus felt compelled to outstrip the "actual" "self-understanding" of the *mens auctoris* and pursue Husserl's phenomenology in its "possibilities." (*GZ*, 63/47, 184/136) He called this the "working out of the hermeneutical situation" (*PA*, 3), i.e., the interpretation of past thought in light of its futural possibilities within the present situation of philosophy. His own philosophy was to be a "more radical internal development" of Husserl's phenomenology (*GZ*, 62/46) and indeed the "most radical phenomenology, which *begins* in the genuine sense 'from below'" (*PA*, 195)," i.e., from the basis of factical life. "The question of

being," he wrote, "is sprung loose through the immanent critique of the natural trend of phenomenological research itself." (*GZ*, 124/91) In 1921–22, he called his own philosophy "ontological phenomenology." (*PA*, 60) In 1925, he told his students that he was still a "learner in relation to Husserl" and expressed the hope that Husserl, whose "questioning is still fully in flux," would take up his suggestions for radically transforming phenomenology. He understood himself as a phenomenologist, if not a Husserlian phenomenologist. (*GZ*, 167–168/121) Thus, later in 1931, Husserl could write to Pfänder, even if somewhat in exaggeration, that, during the early 1920s, Heidegger "behaved entirely as if he were my follower and future co-worker, who would stand on the ground of my constitutive phenomenology in all essentials of method and problematic."[17]

What took place in the young Heidegger's critical appropriation of Husserl's phenomenology is what Gadamer has called a hermeneutical "fusion of horizons"[18] between Husserl's thought and Heidegger's own concern to re-think the question of being within the horizon of "factical life." In keeping with Gadamer's notion of "fusion," the position Heidegger opened up between the two dialoguing partners was neither the one nor the other, but rather an agreement in which both had been, as it were, wounded in the phenomenological battle of giants.[19] Heidegger's concerns were motivated not only by the tradition of western ontology that originally had been transmitted to him through Brentano's work on Aristotle and Carl Braig's *On Being: Outline of Ontology*, but also very much by a cluster of anti-metaphysical traditions which consisted of Dilthey's philosophy of life, Aristotle's practical writings,[20] ancient skepticism, "original Christianity" (Paul's letters, Augustine's *Confessions*, Luther's "theology of the cross," Pascal, Kierkegaard), Jasper's "philosophy of existence," Dostoevsky's novels, and Van Gogh's letters. What these traditions made thematic for him was the horizon of concrete, historical life in terms of which he could radically re-think the traditional question of being. If Husserl could say "you and I are phenomenology," Heidegger could well have replied: you and I – and Dilthey and Kierkegaard and Aristotle. Husserl later came to see that "unfortunately I did not determine his philosophical formation, obviously he was already into his own thing when he studied my writings."[21] The young Heidegger's project of radicalizing Husserl's phenomenology in the direction of the question of being posed within the horizon of concrete historical life is nowhere more clearly expressed than in a passage from





his 1919–21 essay on Karl Jaspers' *Psychology of World-Views*:

> In the first breakthrough of phenomenology in its specific goal of originally re-appropriating the phenomena of *theoretical* experiencing and knowing (Logical Investigations, i.e., phenomenology of the theoretical logos), there was to be found a winning of an unspoiled seeing of the meaning of the objects experienced in such theoretical experiencing and also of the how of its being-experienced in the goal of research. But the possibility of a radical understanding and a genuine appropriation of phenomenological tendencies depends upon the fact that not only the "other" departmentalized "regions of experience" (the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious) corresponding to some philosophical tradition are thoroughly researched in an "analogical" way. Rather, it depends on the fact that experiencing in its full sense is seen in its authentically factical context of enactment in the historically existing self. This self is somehow the ultimate issue in philosophy ... what is relevant is that the concrete self is to be taken into the point of departure for the problems and is to be brought to "givenness" at the authentically fundamental level of phenomenological interpretation, i.e., the interpretation which remains related to the factical experience of life as such. (*AJ*, 34–35)

His project of re-thinking Husserl's phenomenology was to have been sketched out not only in his essay on Jaspers (first published only in 1973), but also in a large book on Aristotle, entitled "Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle,"[22] which he had planned to publish in Husserl's *Jahrbuch* in 1923, as well as in a seventy-page essay entitled "The Concept of Time" which was unsuccessfully submitted to a journal in 1924.[23] When, instead of his book on Aristotle, his *Being and Time* appeared four years later in Husserl's *Jahrbuch*, it certainly presented the results of his "fusion of horizons" with Husserl's thought. But it provided few details about how Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and especially his sixth investigation actually provided the "basis" for this work. For our understanding of the young Heidegger's reading of Husserl, we have been in the past dependent on his sketchy remarks in his *Being and Time* and in his later brief accounts of the early development of his thought. He published nothing in the years 1917–1926 and later, except for his essay on Jaspers, still did not publish anything from his youthful period. But Hannah Arendt has said that during the early 1920s the reputation of the young *Privatdozent* Martin Heidegger spread throughout Germany like the "rumor of the hidden king."[24] For decades, student transcripts of his youthful lecture courses circulated from hand to hand as "esoterica" in a

kind of philosophical underground,[25] surfacing occasionally into the wider philosophical public in reports given by his earliest students such as Oskar Becker, Helene Weiss, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hannah Arendt, and Karl Löwith. Until the publication of his early Freiburg and Marburg lecture courses in the last decade, his youthful reading of Husserl (as well as of Aristotle and Kierkegaard)[26] has had to remain to a great extent on the level of "rumor."

I would now like to attempt, on the basis of the published texts of his lecture courses between 1919 and 1926, a more detailed reconstruction of the major directions of the young Heidegger's "fusion of horizons" with Husserl's phenomenology and especially the sixth investigation in his *Logical Investigations*.[27] I will begin with a short sketch of the general themes of his project for re-thinking the question of being and then proceed to show how he critically appropriated Husserl's phenomenology in developing these themes.

The young Heidegger saw his project as that of bringing about the "end of philosophy" and a "genuine beginning" for the question of being.[28] By "philosophy," he meant the whole history of western thought, which he understood in terms of a "first beginning" with the Greeks that underwent various "transformations" and "re-structurings" in the other two "epochs" of the Middle Ages and modernity. (*PA*, 2–3, 170, 92; *IP*, 20) His youthful formulation of the *Seinsfrage* was "*Seinsfraglichkeit*," the "questionableness of being." (*PA*, 189) He expressed his "genuine beginning" for the question of being in the following formula: "*Leben = Dasein, in und durch Leben 'Sein'*," "life = there-being, '*being*' in and through life". (*PA*, 85, 187) He called this his "phenomenological existential topic," the "place" (*Ort*) (*PA*, 31) of "factical life" as the "origin" of all meaning. But he understood this place of life precisely as the "there" of being. He was not developing some form of mere existentialism or philosophy of life. Although his thought did change after 1930, it is not the case that his thought here underwent a miraculous conversion from a purely human-centred philosophy to a Being-centred one.[29] As we shall see more clearly, many of the basic notions which he first made public in his 1927 *Being and Time* and in his writings after 1930, e.g., the "question of being," the "first beginning," the three "epochs" of metaphysics, the "end of philosophy," the "step-back," the "turn," the "other beginning," the "meaning of being," the "truth" character of being, the "place" character of being, "Ereignis," the "worlding" of the world were either already explicitly used or else operative in his unpublished youthful texts, even if





in a form peculiar to this period of his thought.

For the young Heidegger, Husserl both belonged to the philosophical tradition, which was to be brought to an end, and was to occupy a special place in the radical repetition of this tradition. Adopting the language of Husserl's phenomenology, he articulated his notion of "being-meaning" into the three intentional moments of "content-meaning" (intentional object), "relational meaning" (manner of intending), and "enactment-meaning" or "temporalizing-meaning" (performance of the intentional relation as temporalizing). (*PA*, 52–53) But his "destruction" attempted to "un-build" (*abbauen*) Husserl's phenomenology back into its "origin" within "factical life" by exposing the "founded" character of his "theoretical" articulation of these three intentional moments as noematic "objectivity," "noesis" (to use the language of Husserl's *Ideas*), and "making-present." Heidegger's "retrieval" of these three aspects of intentionality attempted to re-think them more originally as "world," "care," and "temporalizing" within the "genuine phenomenologically primordial stratum (*life in and for itself*)." (*PW*, 121) He thus described his radicalization of phenomenology as an "original leap" (*ursprüngliche Sprung*) into the "origin" (*Ursprung*), a "critical placing in discussion" (*Erörterung*) (*GZ*, 178/128, 140/102) which would place Husserl's phenomenology back into the original "phenomenological existential topic," the "place" (*Ort*) of factical life.[30] Phenomenology was to be retrieved from this origin of "'*being*' in and through life."

Let us now consider, in turn, Heidegger's destructive appropriations of the Husserlian articulations of the three intentional moments of "being-meaning."

### 3. Intentional worlding

I begin with Heidegger's critical appropriation of Husserl's articulation of the intentional moment of "content-meaning" (*Gehaltssinn*). My interpretation of Husserl's sixth investigation, here and in the following sections, follows the general directions of Heidegger's own interpretation primarily, but not exclusively, in his 1925 lecture course (*GZ*, 63–103/47–75).

In chapter six ("Sense and Understanding") of his sixth investigation, Husserl oversteps the empiricist and Kantian restriction of "intuition" to "sense intuition" of sensual objects. He shows how we are always performing acts of "categorial intuition" in which the categorial elements of

perceptual statements (e.g., the 'this' and the 'is' in 'this paper is white') are brought to objective "givenness." For Heidegger, what was decisive here was that "being" is conceived as a "phenomenon" of lived experience and as capable of becoming an explicit phenomenon for phenomenological investigation.

Husserl explains that intuition is a fulfilling intention which fills an empty intention with the immediate givenness of the matter itself. For example, my intentional representation of white paper (e.g., the imagined paper) can be fulfilled by my immediate perception of the white paper (the perceived paper that is bodily there before my eyes). But Husserl insists that the empty meaning-intention in a linguistic expression of an object ('the paper is white', 'the white paper') cannot be fulfilled merely through my "sensuous intuition." What I understand and express in my statement – 'the paper-*being*-white', 'the paper-*as*-white' – cannot be found in the sensuously intuited object, even though it is given "with" this object. Husserl writes: "*Being is no real predicate* [Kant] ... I can see colour, but not *being*-coloured. I can feel smoothness, but not *being*-smooth. I can hear a sound, but not that something *is* sounding. Being is nothing *in* the object ... *being is absolutely imperceptible.*"[31] Therefore, he calls "being" an "excess (*Überschuss*) of meaning." Even though, in my statement 'the paper is white', I say only what I see, what I see (in the wider sense of intuit) is also the *being*-white, the *as*-white, which exceeds the sensuous aspect of the white paper. Again Husserl writes:

> I *see* white paper and *say* 'white paper', thereby I express, with precise adequacy, only what I see ... We are not to let ourselves be led astray by such ways of speaking; they are in a certain manner correct, yet are readily misunderstood ... In *this* knowing another act is plainly present, which perhaps includes the former one, but is nonetheless different from it: the *paper* is known as white, or rather as a white thing, whenever we express our perception in the words 'white paper'. The intention of the word 'white' only partially coincides with the colour-aspect of the appearing object; there remains an excess of meaning, a form, which finds nothing in the appearance to confirm it. White, i.e., *being* white paper. Is this form not also repeated, even if remaining more hidden, in the noun 'paper'? (*LU*, 659–660/775)

In an act of categorial intuition, I can bring what was previously only emptily intended in "the little word 'is'," i.e., the paper-"as"-white, to an explicit self-givenness. "[The *is*] is, however, *self-given* or at least presumably given in the *fulfillment* which under circumstances invests the





judgment: in the *becoming aware* of the presumed state of affairs. Not only what is meant in the partial meaning *gold* itself appears, nor only what is meant in the partial meaning *yellow*, but also *gold-being-yellow* appears." (*LU*, 668/782) For Husserl, the "being" (*Sein*) of a particular "being" (*das Seiende*) is able to appear, as it were, "before our eyes." (*LU*, 671/785) In turn, my higher level act of categorial intuition, which is still founded on sensuous intuition, can become the basis for another type of categorial intuition, namely, "universal intuition" or "ideation." In this universal intuition, I no longer co-intend the founding sensuous object (the white piece of paper) of my categorial intuition, but rather abstractively intend its a priori categorial element (being-white, whiteness), which was previously only unthematically understood. The "'as-what', the universal character of house," Heidegger comments, "is itself not expressly apprehended in what it is, but is already co-apprehended in simple intuition as that which to some extent here illuminates what is given." (*GZ*, 91/67; cf. *LU*, 670/784, 690/799) Husserl later called this ideation "intuition of essence" (*Wesensschau*). It is this categorial or eidetic intuition which gives access to and organizes the various "regional ontologies" of phenomenology. (*HF*, 2; *GZ*, 93–97/68–71)

Heidegger found Husserl's notion of the categorial intuition of being significant for a number of reasons. First, being is freed from its traditional confinement to the function of the copula, i.e., the mere binding together of representations and concepts in a judgment. (*GZ*, 72/54)[32] Nor is being seen to be derived from reflection on inner sense (empiricism) or conceived as a subjective form with which sensuous material is ordered (Kant). (*GZ*, 78/58, 96/70) Nor is it described as a real part of an object, a being, even though it is always the being of a being. (*GZ*, 78/58, 237/175, 362/262)[33] Rather, being is conceived here in such a way that it is able to be brought to an "*originary self-giving* in corresponding acts of giving." (*GZ*, 80/60) Being can become a phenomenon, something which appears, "shows" itself. (*GZ*, 97/71) On this basis, one can raise the question of the "*meaning*" of this being, of what is *meant* by the word "being." (*GZ*, 73/54, 193/143)[34] "Being" is thus not a "mere *flatus vocis*." (*GZ*, 98/71) Second, Heidegger explains that Husserl's notion of categorial intuition as "universal intuition" provides the empirical methodological basis for investigating the categorial structures of being. Husserl showed how categorial-ontological structures can be brought to "evidential" givenness. (*GZ*, 97–98/71–72) Third, by considering being as "objectivity," Husserl's phenomenology implicitly takes up the research of "ancient ontology"

(*GZ*, 98/72), the question of being in Greek philosophy.

But precisely how Heidegger appropriated these three breakthroughs becomes clear only in the light of how he at the same time critically "unbuilt" them back into their origin within factical life. He claimed to be doing nothing other than following up Dilthey's critique and appropriation of phenomenology from the viewpoint of his own project of a "philosophy of life."[35] He writes that Dilthey sought a "psychology as a descriptive science, and we are indebted to him for valuable intuitions about the idea of this science ... The secret longing of his life began to be fulfilled by phenomenology ... But he was no logician, and he saw immediately the significance of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* which at that time were hardly noticed and indeed misunderstood ..." (*PW*, 164–165) Heidegger followed Dilthey's attempt to use Husserl's *Logical Investigations* not, as Husserl had sought to do, for the sake of a "pure logic," but rather for the sake of a "fundamental science of life." (*GZ*, 30/24; *PA*, 80, 117) "Dilthey," he maintained, "was the first to understand the aims of phenomenology ... the essential point here is not so much the conceptual penetration as the sheer disclosure of new horizons for the question of the being of acts and, in the broadest sense, the being of man." (*GZ*, 164–165/118–119) In this passage, Heidegger mentions what these horizons opened up by Dilthey are. As we shall see, they correspond exactly with the three intentional moments of Heidegger's notion of "being-meaning," i.e., content-meaning, relational meaning, and enactment-meaning. Regarding the moment of content-meaning presently under consideration, he paraphrases Dilthey's thesis that "the person in his particular selfhood finds himself over against a world upon which he acts and which reacts upon him." Here Dilthey pushes Husserl's notion of the intentional object out of the realm of logic and into the sphere of the lived experience of the practical and cultural world. The young Heidegger followed him in this project.

Thus he argued that Husserl's characterization of being is taken from the specific way that it is experienced in "theory," the simple "gazing" upon the world which consummates itself in judgment and assertion. The basic sense of being here is object-being, thing-being, reality, nature, "bodilyness" (*Leibhaftigkeit*). (*IP*, 108, 87, 100, 109; *PA*, 91; *GZ*, 83/61, 165/119) Husserl further sees valuative and aesthetic realities as founded on this basic stratum. While appreciating Husserl's passionate intention towards "the things themselves," Heidegger nonetheless maintains that he has naively taken over the traditional idea of being as present at hand





thinghood from Descartes and ultimately from Greek philosophy. (*GZ*, 139/101) He fails to discuss explicitly "the question of the meaning of being." (*GZ*, 179/129) More specifically, Heidegger describes Husserl's approach to the being of the world as an alienating process of "theorization" and "objectification," which lead to the "extinguishing" and the "de-worlding" (*Entweltlichung*) of the immediate "it worlds" (*es weltet*) of the pre-theoretical, practical world.[36] "The 'it worlds'," Heidegger writes, "is already extinguished in [thinghood]. The thing is merely still there as such, i.e., it is real, it exists. Reality is therefore not a characterization of what has the character of the world around us (*Umwelt*), but rather a specifically theoretical characterization, which lies in the essence of thinghood. What has the character of significance (*Bedeutsamkeit*) is de-signified down to the remnant: being-real." (*IP*, 89)

Following up Dilthey's critical reading of Husserl, Heidegger's basic intention was to reverse this process of theorization and de-worlding at work in Husserl's characterization of intentional "content-meaning" and to build-back" this "content-meaning" into its "origin" in the "*Lebenswelt*," the "life-world." (*IP*, 4; *PA*, 6, 94, 97, 115) Here we can highlight three focal points of Heidegger's critical appropriation. First, Husserl's notion of being as object-being (substance, accident, property, etc.) was to be rethought as the "significance" ("being-ready-to-hand-there," "from which," "for which," "towards which," "for the sake of") and the lived "spatiality" of the practical world around us, which is the "everyday world." (*HF*, 85, 93–104) "World," Heidegger writes, "is the fundamental category of content-meaning in the phenomenon of life." (*PA*, 86)

Second, Husserl's theoretical method of "universal intuition" or "ideation" was to be transformed into Heidegger's own method of "*hermeneutical intuition*," the "lived experience of lived experience" (*IP*, 117) which "interpretively explicates" the factical "pre-conception" of being which belongs to factical life.[37] "The phenomenological criterion," he writes, "is solely the understanding evidence and the evidential understanding of lived experiences, of life in and for itself in its eidos." (*PW*, 126) This concrete, interpretive approach to the investigation of being is succinctly expressed in the title to his 1923 lecture course, "Ontology (Hermeneutics of Facticity)." He was influenced here also by Dilthey's development of "hermeneutics" as the method of historical and interpretive understanding in the human sciences. (*HF*, 13–14; *SZ*, 526/450)[38] Moreover, for Heidegger, philosophy was not to arrive at Husserl's atemporal "essences" to which a fixed phenomenological terminology

would correspond. He thought that philosophy is limited to giving "formal indication" or "hermeneutical concepts," which can only point to the things themselves and have to be constantly re-appropriated, since the "things" of phenomenology are characterized by a radical facticity and historicity.[39] Along with Aristotle's method of providing a rough "outline" (*PA*, 192) for practical life and Kierkegaard's notion of "indirect communication" (*AJ*, 41), Heidegger here radicalized and universalized Husserl's notion in his *Logical Investigations* of a certain class of "occasional expressions" (e.g., 'I', 'here', 'you'), whose function is to "indicate" the essentially variable, situational meaning of such expressions.

Third, Husserl's recovery of Greek ontology was thus to be pushed in the direction of Heidegger's own existential-phenomenological ontology, which he called a "science of the origin," a "pre-theoretical or trans-theoretical, in any case a non-theoretical science, a genuine *Ur*-science ..., out of which the theoretical itself takes its origin." (*IP*, 96)

### 4. Intentional life

Heidegger likewise performed a destructive retrieval of the specific manner in which Husserl had worked out the "relational meaning" (*Bezugssinn*) of intentionality, i.e., the "how" of the relation to the intentional object. This becomes visible when we consider Heidegger's reading of Husserl's discussion of "truth" in his *Logical Investigations*.

The question of categorial intuition was for Husserl precisely the issue of the truth present in the sphere of categorial intentions. (*LU*, 651–656/765–770) He defines truth as the "identification" which I achieve when the object gives itself immediately in my intuitive, fulfilling intention just as I had signified it in my empty intention: "We experience how *the same* objective something which was 'merely thought' in a symbolic act is now intuitively presented in intuition, and that it is intuited as being precisely the determinate so-and-so that it was at first merely thought to be (merely signified)." (*LU*, 566/694) He identifies two meanings of the traditional Aristotelian and scholastic notion of "being in the sense of truth" (*on hos alethes; ens tanquam verum*): first, being in the sense of the identification of the signified and the intuited ('the paper [really] *is* white'); second, being in the sense of the "true-making thing," the intuited "being" which bestows fullness on my empty signification. He points out





that these two senses of truth underlie the standard definition of truth as the "correctness of our intention ... the proposition 'directs' itself to the thing itself, it says that it is so, and it really is so." (*LU*, 653/766) In the case of categorial intentions, truth is experienced as the identification I achieve when in my fulfilling categorial intuition the thing itself (paper-*being*-white, paper-*as*-white) "appears" in its "self-appearance" (*LU*, 651/765) just as it was intended in my empty categorial meaning-intention. On Heidegger's reading, this means that "the founded acts *disclose* the simply given objects *anew* ..." (*GZ*, 84/62) "Categorial acts," he explains, "constitute a new objectivity ... [Constituting] means letting the being be seen in its objectivity." (*GZ*, 97/71)

Husserl maintains that especially in the "static unions" of signified and intuited, which we have already achieved and in which we habitually live, we "experience" truth as "identity" without, however, thematically apprehending it. (*LU*, 569–570/697, 652/766) Heidegger's commentary on this Husserlian theme runs as follows: "In the coming into coincidence of the presumed with the intuited, I am solely and primarily directed toward the subject matter itself ... This is the phenomenological sense of saying that in evident perception I do not thematically study the truth of this perception itself, but rather live *in* the truth. Being-true is experienced as a distinctive *relation*, a *comportmental* relation between presumed and intuited specifically in the sense of identity." (*GZ*, 69–70/52) In my disclosive categorial intuition of the thing itself as-something (being), I focus intentionally on the thing itself without thematically considering my categorial meaning-intention, which remains in the background. It is only in a subsequent intentional act that I can make the "identity" involved here into a thematic object or, further, thematize the operative a priori dimension of the categorial itself (ideation).

What captivated Heidegger's attention in Husserl's analysis of "truth" was that truth was investigated here at a more basic level than its traditional definition as the "correctness" of propositions. In the first place, Husserl refers to being itself as "truth" in the sense of the appearance of beings in their being (the "true-making thing" which is disclosed), a notion which, according to Heidegger, is first found in the Greek meaning of truth as *aletheia*, i.e., literally "unconcealment." (*GZ*, 71/51; *LW*, 169–182) Second, Husserl's concept of truth as being-true (the act of identification) points to the act of "disclosure," of "letting appear," which, according to Heidegger, is what Aristotle meant by *aletheuein*, "being-true," "unconcealing." (*GZ*, 71–73/53–54)

But again Heidegger's retrieval attempted to trace these two more basic senses of truth back into the original sphere of factical life. Here, too, he was taking up Dilthey's critical appropriation of Husserl's phenomenology. The second basic thesis from Dilthey, which Heidegger mentions as characterizing his own unique use of phenomenology, is "that in every aspect of being the person, the total person, reacts, not simply in willing, feeling, and reflecting, but all together always at the same time." (*GZ*, 164–165/118–119) "[Dilthey]," Heidegger also writes, "wants to get at the totality of the subject which experiences the world and not to a bloodless thinking thing which merely intends and theoretically thinks the world." (*GZ*, 302/220)

Heidegger thus attempted to show that Husserl's characterization of the "how" of intentional experience was drawn one-sidedly from the attitude of "'mere being directed towards'" (*WU*, 207) which belongs to "theory" and its related comportments of "intuition" (*PA*, 153), "sense perception" (*PA*, 40; *GZ*, 246–247/182, 254/188), "knowing," "judgment," and "assertion" (*GZ*, 219/163). "The so-called logical comportments of thinking or objective theoretical knowing," Heidegger criticizes, "represent only a particular and narrow sphere within the domain of intentionality ..." (*GZ*, 106–107/78; cf. 73/54, 124/91) Again he writes: "Every directing-itself-toward (fear, hope, love) has the feature of directing-itself-toward which Husserl calls *noesis*. Inasmuch as *noein* is taken from the sphere of theoretical knowing, any exposition of the practical here is drawn from the theoretical." (*GZ*, 61/45)

Husserl, Heidegger explains further, views human being as a present at hand object, since he characterizes the human being, which has intentionality for its basic structure, primarily as it is given to theoretical observation. In Husserl's later "transcendental" self-interpretation of phenomenology under the influence of Neo-Kantianism (*GZ*, 124–128/91–93), the person appears explicitly as a thing-like composite of a psycho-physical animal and an intentional consciousness, which consciousness is ultimately supposed to be "absolute being" in relation to the contingent and founded being of the empirical self. The factical human being gets characterized as "'a real object like others in the natural world'," an "'animal being'." (*GZ*, 131/96) The guiding idea of being here is again that of being-real, being a natural object. (*GZ*, 172–173/124–125) Husserl fails to raise the question of the "being of the human," "that of which intentionality is the structure." (*GZ*, 62–63/46–47, 148/108) The question of the "sum" of the theoretically intentional "cogito" is left unasked. (*PA*, 173)





Heidegger readily admits that Husserl's "reduction" from our "natural attitude" back to pure transcendental consciousness does indeed begin with an attempted description of our concrete being in everyday life. But this description, he argues, is already colored by a very unnatural theoretical and objectifying attitude. "In the natural way of experience, does man experience himself, to put it curtly, zoologically? Is this attitude a *natural attitude* or is it not? It is an experience which is totally *un*natural." (*GZ*, 155/113) After such an unnatural description of natural everyday life, Husserl then performs his "reduction" back to transcendental-eidetic consciousness, which, as he says, is "not human." This reduction thereby involves "precisely giving up the ground upon which alone the question of the being of the intentional could be based." (*GZ*, 150–151/109; cf. 157/113–114)

Heidegger maintains, then, that Husserl's description of the person is derived not so much from "the things themselves" as from his "falling" towards the traditional anthropological notion of the human being as the "rational animal," which derives from Greek thought and still prevails in Descartes and Neo-Kantianism. (*PA*, 47, 173; *GZ*, 147/107, 178–180/128–130) His emphasis on the role of "intuition" in intentionality is derived from the Greek orientation to *theorein* (literally "gazing"), which gets taken up in Augustine's notion of the "enjoyment of God" (*fruitio Dei*), Aquinas' "*contemplatio*," Descartes' "*clara et distincta perceptio*," Kant's "*intuitus derivativus*," and the dialectical "*noesis noeseos*" of Hegel. (*LW*, 56, 115–123; *GZ*, 381/276) Heidegger saw Husserl's characterization of the "relational meaning" of intentionality as belonging too much to what he at that time (following Luther and Kierkegaard) called the "ocular," "aesthetic," and "quietive" character of western metaphysics. (*AJ*, 23, 4–5; *PA*, 111, 140)

He described Husserl's "modification to theoretical comportment" (*WU*, 210) toward mere "objects" as a "de-living" (*Ent-leben*) of our practical "lived-experience" (*Er-lebnis*). In theory, my "emotional relation" (*WU*, 211) to the world and my practical way of understanding and speaking are suppressed. Theoretical comportment is an act of "self-alienation" (*HF*, 15), which drives away the personal character of my experience of the world as an "ownmost event" (*Er-eignis*), in which "*ich selbst [das Er-leben] mir er-eigne*," "I event (ap-propriate) lived experience to myself," and in turn my experience of the world "*er-eignet sich seinem Wesen nach*," "e-vents (ap-propriates) itself according to its essence." (*IP*, 73–75) "The lived-experience-of-the-environing world,"

Heidegger writes, "is de-lived to the remnant: knowing something real as such ... Thing-experience (*Erfahrung*) is undoubtedly lived experience (*Erlebnis*), but understood in terms of its origin out of the lived experience of the environing world it is already de-living, un-life (*Ent-lebnis*)." (*IP*, 89–90) Theoretical comportment is, therefore, a "derived mode" of intentional experience. (*GZ*, 215/160)

It was on the basis of this destructive critique that Heidegger's science of the origin attempted to retrieve Husserl's account of intentional "relational meaning." He defined his task precisely as that of going back to the original starting point of Husserl's transcendental and eidetic reductions in the "natural attitude" and here beginning again by investigating the "being of the whole concrete man." (*GZ*, 148–152/107–110, 173/125) In contrast to Husserl's "de-living" of factical life, Heidegger's hermeneutics was to be a "repetition" or "retrieval" of factical life and thus an "en-livening" (*Verlebendigung*) of phenomenological philosophy. (*PA*, 80, 166)

His basic approach to the Husserlian theme of intentional truth was to investigate it not primarily as "the truth of theoretical knowing," but rather primarily as the truth of "practical insight." (*LW*, 8) Here he was taking up the Aristotelian theme of a distinctive type of "practical truth" (*aletheia praktike*) which is given in *phronesis*, "practical understanding." (*HF*, 10–11, 21, 26–27) Regarding Husserl's notion of "being in the sense of truth" as the "self-appearance" of beings in their objectivity (the disclosed "true-making thing"), Heidegger attempted to radicalize it into the notion of the "disclosedness" of the practical "significance" of "ready to hand" beings. (*HF*, 93; *GZ*, 348–349/253) Husserl's other characterization of "being in the sense of truth," i.e., the intentional act of disclosing beings in the "identification" of the signified and the intuited, was transformed by Heidegger in a number of ways.

First, he placed Husserl's theoretically biased notion of intentionality as a disinterested "directing-itself-towards" back into its original meaning as "being-in-a-world." (*HF*, 102) The basic character of this "being-in" is in fact "caring" or "concern" (*HF*, 70; cf. *AJ*, 22; *GZ*, 420/303–304),[40] which takes the forms of understanding, mood, and language. Intentionality is something "ultimate," Heidegger explains, but this ultimacy has to be properly characterized:

> What has always disturbed me: did intentionality fall from heaven? If something ultimate: in which ultimacy is it to be taken? Certainly not secured in a specifically theoretical discovery and experience. That I must live intentionally and must 'be' intentionally, 'elucidate'! ... intentionality is the formal and fundamental structure for all categorial structures of facticity.
>
> Caring is the fundamental meaning of the relation of life ... Full meaning of *intentionality* in what is original! The theoretical attitude faded. (*PA*, 131–132, 98)





Second, Heidegger attempted to re-think Husserl's notion of empty and habitual categorial meaning-intention such that it could now mean the unthematic "prestruction" (*Prestruktion*) or "preconception" (*Vorgriff*) of being, the anticipatory "being-ahead-of-itself" (*sich-vorweg-sein*), which belongs to pre-theoretical, factical life. In other words, he re-interpreted it to mean the prior non-objective "discoveredness" of the "worldhood" of practical "significance." (*GZ*, 349–350/254; *HF*, 97; *LW*, 146–147) He writes: "Prestruction ... as an expression of intentionality: the formal and primordial structure of facticity (of the meaning of the being of life)." (*PA*, 131) Again he writes: "What is meant by intentionality – the bare and isolated directing-itself-towards – must still be set back into the unified and basic structure of being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-involved-in." (*GZ*, 420/303–304)

Third, he pushed Husserl's notion of the disclosing activity of categorial intuition, which fulfills the empty meaning-intention (being-true), in the direction of his own theme of the "interpretive" activity of factical life, which "fulfills" the prior unthematic disclosedness of significance (worldhood) with the interpretive disclosure of beings in their "as"-structure, significance, or being. (*GZ*, 226/167, 73/54, 328/238; *PA*, 33; *HF*, 29, 80)[41] Husserl's static "apophantical 'as'" (the assertoric paper-as-white) was transformed into Heidegger's more situational and interpretive "hermeneutical 'as'" (the practical paper-as-for-writing-wiping-throwing, etc.) of interpretation. (*GZ*, 73/54, 116/85; *LW*, 135–161) Moreover, whereas, according to Heidegger, Husserl views sense perception as the basic stratum on which categorial intentions (expressions) are founded, Heidegger himself wishes to make primary precisely the prior unthematic categorial "interpretedness" or "expressedness" of all experience in preconception, without which the sensed object would never have been accessible. What is primary is not sense perception but rather interpretation. Focusing on the way in which our immediate experience of things is articulated in advance through public everyday understanding, he writes: "... our simplest perceptions and constitutive states are already

*expressed*, even more, are *interpreted* in a certain way ... To put it more precisely: we do not say what we see, but rather the reverse, we see what *one* says about the matter." (*GZ*, 74–75/56; cf. 65/48, 373/270, 416/300)

Four, regarding Husserl's theme of the habitual, unthematic character of categorial meaning intentions in the only "experienced" and not explicitly "known" identification of signified and intuited, Heidegger transformed this theme into his notion of how factical life has the tendency to "fall" towards the beings in which its "care" is absorbed, such that its prior discoveredness of the world and itself in preconception remains unthematic. Factical life has the tendency to interpret itself solely in terms of beings. Thus, for Heidegger, the phenomenological "reduction" meant a leading back not to the a priori of a transcendental-eidetic consciousness, but rather to the a priori operative within the preconception of factical life ("hermeneutical intuition"). Heidegger's notes for his 1921–22 lecture course read: "The ruinant flight into the world; away from objects; positive meaning of Husserl's 'reduction'." (*PA*, 39)[42]

Finally, for Heidegger the intentionality of factical life was not to be investigated in Husserl's manner as an impersonal, thing-like "what" (essence) belonging to the equally thing-like "that" of the psycho-physical subject (particular) which has this intentional reason as its upper storey. Rather, he wanted to understand the "what" (intentional consciousness) and the "that" (embodiment) ultimately in terms of a "how" of a possible "way to be" or "exist" for a personal "who," which is always "mine" and is characterized by the finitude of temporal "awhileness" (*Jeweiligkeit*). (*GZ*, 151–152/109–110, 205–207/152–154)

### 5. Intentional history

Finally, the young Heidegger's destructive retrieval was also directed to Husserl's characterization of the "enactment-meaning" (*Vollzugssinn*) or "temporalizing-meaning" (*Zeitigungssinn*) of intentionality. This temporal enactment ultimately defines the "how" of the whole intentional relation itself.

In his sixth investigation, Husserl refers to the temporal character of the fulfilling intentions in which an identification of signified and intuited, i.e., truth, is achieved. He describes the fulfilling intention as an act of "making-present" (*gegenwärtigen*) or "presenting" (*präsentieren*): "The intentional character of perceiving ... is making-present (presenting)."





(*LU*, 646/761) "The object is actually 'present' or 'given', and present as just what we have intended it." (*LU*, 647/762) Categorial intuition "presents" the sensuous object anew in its categorial structure and *"temporalizes (zeitigt) a new consciousness of objectivity."* The categorially structured object, the being in its being, becomes "'present'," is *"set before our eyes."* (*LU*, 670–675/784–787; cf. *GZ*, 85–90/63–66, 96–97/70–71) In the second volume of his *Ideas*, he calls this making-present "appresentation."[43] In his *Logical Investigations*, he does not systematically discuss the temporal character of intentional acts, but in his early *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, which were later edited by Heidegger, he does give detailed analyses of "memory," "expectation," and "presentation."

What appealed to Heidegger in Husserl's discussions of the temporal character of intentionality was that here "being in the sense of truth" pointed in the direction of its basic meaning as time: The disclosed "true-making thing" becomes "present" for the "making-present" of my disclosive fulfilling intention. But again his retrieval of these indications passed through the crucible of his destructive critique. Here he took up Dilthey's introduction of the theme of history into Husserl's phenomenology. The third basic thesis of Dilthey, which, according to Heidegger, was operative in the former's appropriation of Husserl, was that "the life-context of the person is in every situation one of development." (*GZ*, 164–165/118–119)[44]

Heidegger points out that, in his refutation of psychologism, Husserl draws the distinction "between the real being of the psychical and the ideal being of propositions in judgments – and moreover, between the temporal happening of the real and the atemporal subsistence of the ideal." (*LW*, 50) Thus, in his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl writes that "what is true is absolute, is true 'in itself'; the truth is identically the same, whether humans or non-humans, angels or gods comprehend it in judgments." (*LU*, 125/140) Heidegger attempts to show that Husserl understands being and truth within the temporal horizon of the static "presence" of ideal meaning over against the temporal variance of intentional acts. He subscribes, Heidegger maintains, to the traditional "'couplets of opposition' real-ideal, sensible-nonsensible, beings-the valid, the historical-the transhistorical, the temporal-the atemporal." (*LW*, 92–93) For Husserl, the acts of "making-present" are thus at bottom individuating acts that instantiate ideal meaning in the spatio-temporal world. Heidegger claims that in this regard Husserl belongs to a tradition which begins with Plato's and

Aristotle's notion of being as "always-being" (*aei on*) and "presence" (*ousia*), which is correlated to "*theorein*," "gazing." (*LW*, 67–72, 56) Husserl's notion of meaning as "immutable and invariant identity" is "identical with the discovery of the concept of being in Parmenides and in Plato." (*GZ*, 92/68, 102/75; *HF*, 42) This understanding of being comes to Husserl, he further argues, via Lotze's notion of "validity" and also through the Neo-Kantianism of Natorp, Windelband, and Rickert, who distinguish between the validity of the atemporal, ideal content (logical truth, value) of judgments and the real temporal act of judging. (*LW*, 62–88; *PA*, 47, 111, 163) He writes: "What kind of being stands here in pre-having? Being present at hand, being present (*Gegenwärtigsein*) ..." "... pure *presence* (*Gegenwart*). This temporal determination comes into play in the characterization of objectivity. Why this is so must be made understandable." (*HF*, 43, 65)

More specifically, Heidegger describes Husserl's understanding of the temporal character of the intentional relation (i.e., the correlation of the static presence of ideal meaning and passive ocular making-present) as the "extinguishing of the situation" (*WU*, 205–207), the "de-historicization" (*Entgeschichtlichung*) of the "ownmost event" of one's lived experience and of the "it worlds." "The historical I," he writes, "is de-historicized to the remnant of a specific I-ness as the correlate of thinghood ..." (*IP*, 89, cf. 85) "The pure ego," he said in a conversation in 1919, "would derive from the 'historical ego' via the repression of all historicity."[45]

In his "critique of the [Neo-Kantian and Husserlian] critique of psychologism" (*LW*, 87), Heidegger took up not only Dilthey's thought, but also the impulses of ancient skepticism and modern psychologism, since he thought that they made problematic precisely the relation (*methexis*) of the ideal to "living thought." (*LW*, 88; cf. 52, 54, 92)[46] He attempted to appropriate Husserl's discussions of the temporal character of intentionality from the standpoint of the full phenomenon of historical time in factical life. First, he re-interpreted Husserl's Platonic notion of the a priori (literally the "before," the "earlier") to mean the futural being-ahead-of-itself of factical life, its "not yet," and "horizon of expectation." (*IP*, 115; *GZ*, 99/72; *AJ*, 22) Second, he transformed Husserl's notion of "making present," as the act of static individuation, into his own notion of the "temporalizing" of one's futural understanding, which interpretively "presents" (*HF*, 55–56, 79), "makes-present," or "appresents"[47] beings within a practical "situation" that is shaped also through the past. (*GZ*, 292/213–214, 359/260; *LW*, 192)[48] "The life-relation of the situation-I,"





he writes, "is no mere being-directed to mere objects. Every lived experience is intentional, it contains a 'view towards' something or other (the view which grasps, foresees and remembers in a very preferential manner). The view has a 'quality' (quality of the act-character)." (*WU*, 206–207)[49] Finally, Heidegger accordingly saw the "presence" of beings in their being not as the individuation of timeless meaning, but rather as essentially interpretive and historical presence. "The full meaning of a phenomenon," he maintains, "encompasses its intentional relation-character, content-character, and enactment-character ..." (*AJ*, 22)[50]

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to sketch briefly the fate of the young Heidegger's fusion of horizons with Husserl's phenomenology in his subsequent development and finally end with some comments on the significance of his youthful existential-phenomenological way for our understanding of his whole thought.

Already around the time of the composition of his *Being and Time* in 1926, Heidegger began to distance himself from his identification with phenomenology. For example, the almost two hundred page introductory discussion of Husserl's phenomenology, which had originally appeared at the start of one of Heidegger's first drafts of "Being and Time," namely, his 1925 lecture course entitled *The History of the Concept of Time*, disappeared in the published text *Being and Time* in 1927.[51] His detailed discussions of how his critical appropriation of Husserl was carried out and also his adoption of Husserl's terminology suffered the same fate. What marked *Being and Time* as a distantiation from his identification with Husserl was his newly emerging preoccupation with the transcendental thought of Kant. His 1925–26 lecture course was to have been a reading of the notion of truth in Husserl and Aristotle, but half-way through the semester he instead turned to an examination of Kant's treatment of time in his "doctrine of schematism." In a lecture course devoted to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1927–28, he told his students: "When I began again to study Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* a few years ago and read it, as it were, against the background of Husserl's phenomenology, it was as if the blinders fell from my eyes, and Kant became for me the confirmation of the correctness of the way for which I was searching." (*IK*, 431) His appropriation of Kant's analysis of time in

the "doctrine of schematism" placed his whole work *Being and Time* in the language of transcendental thought. He called this new 1927 draft of "Being and Time" "fundamental ontology," which was supposed to provide "*transcendental* knowledge." (*SZ*, 51/62) His new lexicon for the three intentional moments of "being-meaning" appeared as worldly "structures" (content-meaning), a transcendental "Dasein" (relational meaning) which seemed to be an existentialized version of Kant's transcendental consciousness, and temporal "schemata" (temporalizing-meaning).

Heidegger's *Being and Time* is really only one interpretive draft of his youthful project of exploring the relation of "Being and Time" – and a late one at that. Thus, Oskar Becker, who attended Heidegger's lecture courses from 1919 onwards, could say, even if somewhat in exaggeration, that *Being and Time* is "no longer the original Heidegger."[52] The earlier drafts of his "Being and Time" are to be found in his lecture courses from 1919 onwards, in his 1919–21 essay on Karl Jaspers, in his planned book on Aristotle in 1922–23, and in his 1924 essay "The Concept of Time." Thus, I consider his 1927 *Being and Time* to be almost one of his 'later writings' and consider the author to be almost already the 'later Heidegger'. This makes a mess of our previously adequate division into "the early Heidegger" and the "later Heidegger," but with the ongoing publication of his youthful writings, I think we will be forced to start re-thinking our manner of making divisions in the development of his thought.

In the 1930s, after his realization that his adoption of the language of transcendental thought in his *Being and Time* was an aberration which led to an "inadequate interpretation of my own intention" (*BR*, xv/xiv), Heidegger turned to the early Greek thinkers, Hölderlin, and Nietzsche as his preferred dialoguing partners. If such a crude schematization is allowed, now his new draft of "Being and Time" appeared as the "fourfold" of "earth and sky, gods and mortals" (content-meaning), poetic "dwelling" (relational meaning), and the "destiny of being" (temporalizing-meaning). Husserl's phenomenology, along with Aristotle's practical writings and Kierkegaard's existential thought, slipped more and more into his eschatological notion of the history of the "forgetfulness of being." (*S*, 379, 387–394)[53] In his 1969 Le Thor seminar, he divided the development of his question of being into the three "thought-paths" of the "meaning of being" (*Being and Time*), the "truth of being" (1930s and 40s), and the "topos of being" (1940s onwards). (*S*, 344) He made this division retrospectively with the themes of his later thought after 1930 in mind, i.e., at a time when his youthful thought in the





early twenties no longer interested him, a situation which is further indicated by the fact that he made no plans to have his early Freiburg lecture courses included in the *Collected Edition* of his writings.[54]

I am arguing, then, that a more adequate reading of the development of Heidegger's thought involves viewing his youthful existential-phenomenological "thought-path" of "'*being*' in and through life" as at least a fourth way in which he thought his enduring question of being, or, better, as the *original* way which he took up and transformed in his subsequent thought-paths. Moreover, his youthful existential-phenomenological way provides us with a different language for talking about and appropriating his concerns, one which is neither the quasi-transcendental language of *Being and Time* nor the mytho-poetic language of the Heidegger after 1930.[55]

In reading and appropriating Heidegger in these ways, we should not be intimidated by the fact that he himself might not have looked on in approval, perhaps in much the same way that the later Husserl looked on in disapproval when in the early twenties Heidegger preferred his early *Logical Investigations* to his later *Ideas* as an introduction to phenomenology. (*SD*, 87/79) To stress this point, I would like to close with two brief passages. The first is from Heidegger, who states that the deeper meaning of fidelity to a thinker always means fidelity to the *Sache*, the matter of his or her thought: "Whoever gets involved in being-on-the-way to the sojourn in the oldest of the old, will bow to the necessity of later being understood differently than he meant to understand himself." (*WM*, ix) The second passage, which speaks for itself, is from one of Heidegger's early students in the twenties, H.-G. Gadamer: "One needs to have a lot of courage to admit to oneself that a great man can himself nonetheless underestimate his own radiance and above all the promising richness of his beginnings ... I can even imagine that Heidegger himself would have found many new things in this his youthful text [*Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*], had he been able to read it with the eyes with which someone reads, who is not him."[56]

## Notes

1. The following abbreviations for Heidegger's writings will be used in parentheses in the body of my essay (the page numbers given after the slash are those of the available English translation; however, I take responsibility for all translations appearing in this essay):

GA Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976 – ).

*Earliest Works (1910–1917)*

FS *Frühe Schriften* (GA, vol. 2).
BG "Brief an Grabmann" (in Hermann Köstler, "Heidegger schreibt an Grabmann," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 87 [1980]).

*Youthful works (1919–1925/26)*

AJ "Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers 'Psychologie der Weltanschauungen' (1919–1921)" (in GA, vol. 9)
BK "Brief an Krebs" (1919) (in Bernhard Casper, "Martin Heidegger und die Theologische Fakultät Freiburg," in *Freiburger Diözesan-Archiv*, 1980, *Kirche am Oberhein*, hrsg. Remigius Bäumer, Karl Suso Frank, Hugo Ott [Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1980])
GZ *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (GA, vol. 20; translated as *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, tr. Theodore Kisiel [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985])
HF *Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)* (GA, vol. 63)
IP "Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem" (in GA, vol. 56/57)
LW *Logic. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (GA, vol. 21)
PA *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (GA, vol. 61)
PW "Phänomenologie und transzendentale Wertphilosophie" (in GA, vol. 56/57)
WU "Über das Wesen der Universität und des akademischen Studiums" (in GA, vol. 56/57)

*Later Works (1927–1976)*

BH "Brief an Husserl" (in Edmund Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie, Husserliana, IX*, ed. Walter Biemel [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968], pp. 600–602)
BKB "Brief an Krämer-Badoni" (in Rainer A. Bast, "Bericht: Ein Brief Martin Heideggers an Rudolf Krämer-Badoni über die Kunst," *Phänomenologische Forschung*, 18 [1986], pp. 175–182)
BR "Brief an Richardson" (German and English) (in William J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963])
EM *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (GA, vol. 40; translated as *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. Ralph Mannheim [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959])
GP *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (GA, vol. 24; translated as *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, tr. Albert Hofstadter [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982])





IK *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (GA, vol. 25)
KM *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (GA, vol. 3; translated as *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, tr. James S. Churchill [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965])
ML *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* (GA, vol. 26; translated as *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, tr. Michael Heim [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984])
P "Die Idee der Phänomenologie" (in Edmund Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie, Husserliana, IX*, ed. Walter Biemel, pp. 256–263; translated as "The Idea of Phenomenology," tr. Thomas J. Sheehan, *Listening*, 12 [1977], pp. 111–117)
S *Seminare* (GA, vol. 15)
SD *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1976); translated as *On Time and Being*, tr. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972)
SZ *Sein und Zeit* (GA, vol. 2; translated as *Being and Time*, tr. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967])
US *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (GA, vol. 12; translated as *On the Way to Language*, tr. Peter D. Hertz [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1971])
VA Vorträge und Aufsätze (Pfullingen: Neske, 1985)
WM *Wegmarken* (GA, vol. 9)
ZP "Über das Zeitverständnis in der Phänomenologie und im Denken der Seinsfrage" (in *Phänomenologie – lebendig oder tot?*, hrsg. Helmut Gehrig [Karlsruhe Badenia, 1969], p. 47; translated as "The Understanding of Time in Phenomenology and in the Thinking of the Being-Question," tr. Thomas Sheehan and Frederick Elliston, *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 10 [1979]: 200–201)

A shorter version of my essay was presented in June, 1988 at the Semi-Centennial Meeting of the North American Husserl Circle at Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario, Canada. I am grateful to especially Burt Hopkins for his helpful comments, as well as for his making available copies of Husserl's letters to Heidegger between 1916 and 1932, the originals of which are preserved in the Husserl Archives in Leuven, Belgium.

2. For a list of his already published youthful writings, as well as those planned for publication, see the publisher's prospectus: *Martin Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe, Stand: Juni 1989* (Vittorio Klostermann). As of 1988, his unpublished youthful writings planned for publication have been turned over to the respective editors and thus presumably will all be published by the turn of the century.
3. In his later reflections on the origins of his early thought, Heidegger reported that he had been studying Husserl's *Logical Investigations* "from 1909 onwards" and had expected "decisive aid" from it for the question of being which he had discovered in Franz Brentano's *On the Manifold Meaning of Being in Aristotle* and in Carl Braig's *On Being: An Outline of Ontology*. (*SD*, 81–82/74–75; *FS*, 56/translated by Hans Seigfried as "A Recollection,"

in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan [Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981], p. 21).

4. Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 340.
5. Their philosophical collaboration prior to 1919 was apparently restricted to some correspondence and Husserl's assistance in getting Heidegger's habilitation writing on Duns Scotus published in 1916. (*FS*, 191)
6. Thomas J. Sheehan, "Heidegger's Early Years: Fragments for a Philosophical Biography," *Listening* 12 (1977): 7.
7. Karl Jaspers, "On Heidegger," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 7 (1978): 108.
8. Dorion Cairns, *Conversations with Husserl and Fink*, ed. Richard M. Zaner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 9.
9. Theodore J. Kisiel, "Heidegger's Early Lecture Courses," in *A Companion to Heidegger's "Being and Time,"* ed. Joseph J. Kockelmans (Washington, DC: Centre for Advanced Phenomenological Research and University Press of America, 1986), p. 24.
10. See "Verzeichnis der Vorlesungen und Übungen von Martin Heidegger," in William J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), pp. 663–665; Kisiel, "Heidegger's Early Lecture Courses," pp. 28–29.
11. Quoted in Sheehan, "Heidegger's Early Years," p. 5.
12. For example, his unpublished 1923–24 lecture course *The Beginning of Modern Philosophy* (*Introduction to Phenomenological Research*) contains a detailed discussion of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (see Theodore Kisiel, "On the Way to *Being and Time*; Introduction to the Translation of Heidegger's *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*", *Research in Phenomenology*, XV, p. 196).
13. Cf. *SZ*, 51/63; *BR*, xiii/xii; *S*, 379; *ZP*, 47/200–201.
14. In 1923, he held an official seminar entitled "Phenomenological Exercises (Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II)" and, in 1922–23, held another seminar entitled "Husserl, *Ideas*, I."
15. *SZ*, 67, n. 9/75, n. x; 289, n. 15/261, n. xxxiv; 480, n. 10/414, n. xxiii.
16. Regarding p. 192 (lines 22–29)/pp. 141(lines 39–40)–142(lines 1–5), see the "Errata" published at the beginning of *PA*, II.
17. E. Husserl, A. Pfänder, "Fünf Briefe," in *Pfänder-Studien*, hrsg. H. Spiegelberg, E. Avé-Lallemant (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 345.
18. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger's Wege* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1983), pp. 130, 118; *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. II* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986), p. 484; "Der Eine Weg Martin Heideggers," in *Jahresgabe der Martin-Heidegger-Gesellschaft*, 1986, p. 13. Heidegger's interpretations of the history of philosophy in the early 1920s became a model for Gadamer's notion of "fusion of horizons."
19. When Husserl finally became aware of the differences between himself and his "phenomenological child" Heidegger, he took up in his own way Heidegger's suggestions for re-thinking phenomenology in terms of "factical





life" and undertook his own "fusion of horizons" with Heidegger's new version of phenomenology. He did this in the reworking of his *Cartesian Meditations* and in his *Crisis*, which for the first time systematically introduced his notion of the "life-world." See Edmund Husserl, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), p. 56; Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 158. In his later introduction to his *Ideas*, Husserl discussed Heidegger's new version of phenomenology and spoke of how "transcendental phenomenology" "includes all questions that are raised concerning concrete human life" (Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie and phänomenologischen Philosophie, Drittes Buch, Husserliana, Bd. V* [Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952], p. 141). Husserl once remarked that Heidegger's analyses of the environing world were rooted in paragraph 27 of Husserl's own *Ideas* (Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion', 1920–21," in *The Personalist*, 60 [1979]: 318).

20. He maintained that "Aristotle [was] really in De Anima phenomenological (without the explicit Reduction)" (quoted in Herbert Spiegelberg, "Husserl to Heidegger; From a 1928 Diary by W.R. Boyce Gibson," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2 [1971]: 73).
21. Husserl, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, p. 41.
22. Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege*, p. 118. See also Theodore Kisiel, "The Missing Link in the Early Heidegger," in *Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Lectures and Essays*, ed. Joseph J. Kockelmans (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1988), pp. 1–40.
23. See Theodore Kisiel, "Why the First Draft of *Being and Time* was Never Published," in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 20 (1989): 3–22. Heidegger's essay was an expanded version of his 1924 Marburg talk which bore the same title and which Gadamer has called the "original form of *Being and Time*" (Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege*, p. 29). Cf. *SZ*, 356, n. 3/313, n. iii.
24. Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Michael Murray (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 293–294.
25. Kisiel, "Heidegger's Early Lecture Courses," p. 24.
26. For a general account of Heidegger's youthful period, which also deals with his readings of Aristotle and Christian authors, see my "The Young Heidegger: Rumor of a Hidden King (1919–1926)," *Philosophy Today* (1989) (forthcoming).
27. In addition to those already cited, the following studies of the young Heidegger's relation to Husserl have also influenced my own study: Jacques Taminiaux, "Heidegger and Husserl's *Logical Investigations*: In remembrance of Heidegger's last seminar (Zähringen)," in *Radical Phenomenology*, ed. John Sallis (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1978), pp. 58–83; Theodore Kisiel, "Heidegger (1907–1927): The Transformation of the Categorial," in *Continental Philosophy in America*, eds. Hugh J. Silverman,

John Sallis, Thomas M. Seebohm (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983), pp. 177–185; Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers Neubestimmung des Phänomenbegriffs," *Phänomenologische Forschung* 9 (1980): 124–162.

28. See *PA*, 35: "Skepticism is a beginning, and as the genuine beginning it is also the end of philosophy." In a 1919 letter to Engelbert Krebs, his Catholic patron at the university in Freiburg, Heidegger wrote that "epistemological insights, extending to the theory of historical knowledge, have made the *system* of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable to me – not, however, Christianity and metaphysics (these, though, in a new sense) ..." (*BK*, 541) He wrote to Karl Löwith in 1921 that he was "not a 'philosopher' in any sense at all," but rather someone "who has the single task (completely unsuitable for the schoolroom and progress) of critically destroying the traditional conceptuality of western philosophy and theology, where it can indeed also turn out that sometimes he is only threshing 'empty straw'." (Karl Löwith, *Heidegger: Denker in dürftiger Zeit, 2. Aufl.* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960], p. 106) In his 1923 lecture course, he told his students "that, as far as he was concerned, philosophy was over." (reported in Thomas Sheehan, "The 'Original Form' of Sein und Zeit: Heidegger's Der Begriff der Zeit (1924)," in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 10 [1979]: 82)
29. In his letter to William Richardson, Heidegger explained that there was a "bend" or "twist" (*Wendung*) in his thought around 1930, which, however, was not really a "turn" (*Kehre*) or "reversal" (*Umkehr*) from a "Heidegger I" to a "Heidegger II." (*BR*, xvii) "Heidegger II," he insisted, was already contained in "Heidegger I." That is to say, the basic "intention" (*Vorhaben*) (*BR*, xv) of his questioning remained the same from the early 1920s onwards, namely, to ask what "'*being*' in and through life" means, or, put in other words, to think the relation of being and factical life. Since this intention originated in the early twenties, one can rightly conclude, in the words of one commentator, that "Heidegger II put in an appearance before Heidegger I." (David Farrell Krell, *Intimations of Mortality: Time, Truth, and Finitude in Heidegger's Thinking of Being* [University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1986], p. 180, n. 3) The "bend" in his thought after 1930 concerns not so much a transformation in the basic intention of his thought as rather the realization that the quasi-Kantian, "transcendental" language of his *Being and Time* led to an "inadequate interpretation of my own intention" (*BR*, xv), which realization forced him to search for new and what he thought were more adequate ways of realizing his intention. If there is anything like a basic "turn" in his development, it is to be found rather in his youthful turn away from the "onto-logic" and the "ontotheology" of his doctoral dissertation and his habilitation writing. In his 1920–21 lecture course, he thus spoke of the necessity of a "complete turning-around (*Umwandlung*) of philosophy." He also spoke of his philosophy as "the going-back (*Rückgang*) into the originary-historical." (reported in Sheehan, "Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion', 1920–21," pp. 316, 317) This notion of "going-back", along with that of phenomenological "re-duction" as a "leading back"





from beings to being, are his first appellations for what he later called the "step back" out of metaphysics into an "other beginning." After 1919, he turned away from his earlier metaphysical lexicon of being as objectivity and value (content-meaning) for a transcendental consciousness (relational meaning), both of which were conceived within the horizon of the fixed presence of logical atemporality and the eternity of God (temporalizing-meaning). As I attempt to show below, what he turned towards was the "genuine beginning" of being as the "it worlds" of the world (content-meaning) for the factical self (relational meaning), which happens as an "event" (*Ereignis*) (temporalizing-meaning). This "event" of the "it worlds" is more being than consciousness. As Gadamer has said, this is "the turn before the turn." ("Der Eine Weg Martin Heideggers," pp. 14–15) For Heidegger's critique of modern "ego-metaphysics" from Descartes to German idealism and Neo-Kantianism, see *PA*, 173, 88, 91; *IP*, 71–73. For his critique of modern technology, where he discusses Spengler's *Decline of the West*, see *PA*, 26, 74; *PW*, 130, 136; *LW*, 37; cf. *AJ*, 9.

30. Cf. Heidegger's later discussion of his early appropriation of the theme of intentionality as a "revolution in the place of thinking," a "shift of place" from "consciousness" to "Dasein." (*S*, 379–385).
31. Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen, Husserliana, Bd. XIX/2* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), pp. 665–666; translated as *Logical Investigations, Vol. II*, tr. J.N. Findlay (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 780–781. All further references to this work will be given with the abbreviation *LU* in parentheses in the body of my essay.
32. For a full discussion of the traditional restriction of being to the copula in judgment, see Chapter 4 of Heidegger's 1927 lecture course (*GP*), which undoubtedly draws on his early reading of Husserl's sixth investigation. See also *SZ*, 212/202, 476/411.
33. In a later seminar, Heidegger described the Greek experience of being as a "superabundance" (*Überfülle*) and "excess (*Übermass*) of presence" (*S*, 331), thereby echoing Husserl's notion of being as an "excess" (*Überschuss*) (*S*, 334). Husserl's notion has to be seen as the precedent for Heidegger's talk of "transcendence," the "ontological difference," "ecstasis" and "existence" in *Being and Time* and his 1927 lecture course *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (*GP*) (see especially Chapter 1 of the latter, which discusses Kant's statement that "being is not a real predicate"). See also Jacques Taminiaux, "Heidegger and Husserl's *Logical Investigations*," pp. 77–83. Likewise, Heidegger's description of being as the "nothing" and his preference for saying of being not being 'is', but rather *es gibt*, there is/it gives/it is given hearken back to Husserl's discussion of how, even though being is "given," it is not a thing which is (*SZ*, 281/255; *GP*, 13–14/10). For other passages which hearken back to Husserl's notion of being as an "excess," see *EM*, 36–39/33–36; *SD*, 3/3.
34. See also *S*, 377–378: "Husserl's accomplishment consisted precisely in this making present of being, which is phenomenally present in the category. Through this accomplishment ... I finally had a basis: 'being' is no mere

concept, is no pure abstraction, which arises in the course of a derivation." (cf. 334)

35. For a discussion of Dilthey's influence on the young Heidegger, see Otto Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1983), pp. 30–36; Kisiel, "Heidegger (1907–1927): The Transformation of the Categorial," pp. 173–176; Gadamer, "*Der Eine Weg Martin Heideggers*," pp. 11–12. See also *SD*, 48/45.
36. *IP*, 71–73, 88–89; *WU*, 205–206; *PA*, 91, 97; *GZ*, 266/196, 300–301/219.
37. See also *SZ*, 67, n. 9/75, n. x: "But disclosing the a priori is not 'a-prioristic' construction. Through E. Husserl we have once again learned not only to understand the meaning of all genuine philosophical empiricism, but also to make use of the necessary tools. 'A-priorism' is the method of every scientific philosophy which understands itself. There is nothing constructivistic about it. But for this very reason research on the a priori requires the proper preparation of the phenomenal basis. The horizon which is closest to us, which must be made ready for the analytic of Dasein, lies in its average everydayness."
38. See Kisiel, "Heidegger (1907–1927): The Transformation of the Categorial," pp. 173–176.
39. *IP*, 13–15; *PA*, 34–35, 47, 88; *HF*, 10, 16, 71; *GZ*, 190/140.
40. See also Oskar Becker's report on Heidegger's 1923 lecture course in his "Mathematischer Existenz: Untersuchungen zur Logik und Ontologie mathematischer Phänomene," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung*, 8 (1927), p. 626.
41. See also *SZ*, 201/193: "Dasein only 'has' meaning, so far as the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world can be 'fulfilled' through the beings which are discoverable in it." For Heidegger's acknowledgment of Husserl's sixth investigation as the "basis" for his long discussion of "truth" in *Being and Time*, see *SZ*, 289, n. 15/261, n. xxxiv.
42. Cf. Heidegger's critical appropriation of Husserl's "reduction" in his 1927 lecture course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (*GP*, 29/21).
43. Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch, Husserliana IV* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), pp., 161–169.
44. In his *Being and Time*, Heidegger presents his analysis of "history" as an "appropriation of Dilthey's work" (*SZ*, 525/449).
45. Quoted in Thomas Sheehan, "'Introductory Note' to 'The Understanding of Time in Phenomenology and in the Thinking of the Being-Question,'" *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 10 (1979): 199.
46. The lecture course which Heidegger scheduled for the winter semester of 1922–23 was entitled *Skepticism in Ancient Philosophy (Phenomenological Interpretations of Sextus Empiricus, Hypotyposeon*, III). See also Wilhelm Szilasi, "Interpretation und Geschichte der Philosophie," in *Martin Heideggers Einfluss* auf die Wissenschaften (Bern: A. Franke AG. Verlag, 1949), pp. 75–76. In his 1921–22 lecture course, Heidegger calls his own philosophy "skepticism." (*PA*, 35, 197) His interest in ancient skepticism belonged





together with his interest in ancient rhetoric and the ethics of Socrates-Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, since all these have the virtue of making "factical life" thematic.

47. In his 1925 lecture course, Heidegger notes that he has been studying the unpublished manuscript of the second volume of Husserl's *Ideas* (*GZ*, 168/121), in which the term "appresentation" occurs. He uses the terms "making-present" and "appresentation" interchangeably throughout this lecture course.
48. In his *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges his indebtedness to Husserl's notion of "making-present": "Husserl uses the expression 'making-present' to characterize sense perception ... The *intentional* analysis of perception and intuition in general must have suggested this 'temporal' description of the phenomenon. That and how the intentionality of 'consciousness' is *grounded* in the ecstatical temporality of Dasein will be shown in the following [never published] section" (*SZ*, 480, n. 10/414, n. xxiii).
49. Cf. Heidegger's comment in his 1928 lecture course (*ML*, 264/204): "That which Husserl still calls time-consciousness, i.e., consciousness of time, is precisely time itself, in the primordial sense ... Temporality in its temporalizing is the primordially self-unifying unity of expectancy, retention and making-present."
50. In *GZ*, 106/78, Heidegger says that the "matter itself" of Husserl's phenomenology is "*intentionality in its apriori*, understood in the two directions of *intentio* and *intentum*." Here, in a glance, we can see his full description of the "matter itself" to which phenomenological inquiry is supposed to be directed in accord with Husserl's slogan "Back to the things themselves": first, the intentio-intentum relation is to be studied within the sphere of factical life; and, second, the third moment of historical "temporalizing-meaning" is to be explicitly added. Here we now have the full "matter itself" of the "phenomenon" of intentionality. Heidegger's insight into especially the intentional moment of "temporalizing-meaning" is the genesis of his life-long "matter" or "topic" (*Sache*), which he will pursue on his many later "thought-paths" (primarily "the meaning of being," the "truth of being," and the "topos of being").
51. The *general* plans in Heidegger's two texts, his 1925 lecture course and his *Being and Time*, are virtually the same.
52. Quoted in Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers*, p. 351. Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophische Lehrjahre: Eine Rückschau* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), p. 173.
53. The word "phenomenology" no longer occurs in the titles of Heidegger's lecture courses and seminars after 1929 ("Verzeichnis der Vorlesungen und Übungen von Martin Heidegger," pp. 663–665). The later Heidegger does still consider his thought to be some form of phenomenology, e.g., a "phenomenology of the inconspicuous" (*S*, 399, cf. 288, 297; *SD*, 48/45, 90/82; *BR*, xv/xiv, xvii/xvi; *WM*, 357; *ZP*, 47/200–201). See also Bernard Boelen, "Martin Heidegger as Phenomenologist," in *Phenomenological*

*Perspectives: Historical and Systematic Essays in Honor of Herbert Spiegelberg* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 93–114; Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement*, pp. 401–407. But the later Heidegger reads Husserl's phenomenology no longer in the light of Dilthey, Aristotle's practical thought, and Kierkegaard, but rather in the light of especially the Pre-Socratics. See his 1973 seminar on his youthful appropriation of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, in which he concludes by retrieving Husserl's notion of truth from the point of view of Parmenides' concept of *aletheia* (*S*, 133–138; cf. *SD*, 71–80/64–73). Husserl's thought is here virtually eclipsed. One of the participants of Heidegger's 1973 seminar, Jacques Taminiaux, found "surprising" Heidegger's "reservation" and "silence" regarding the "extent of insight that this fascinating text had exerted on him" (Taminiaux, "Heidegger and Husserl's *Logical Investigations*," pp. 75, 82).

54. Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann, "Die Edition der Vorlesungen Heideggers in seiner Gesamtausgabe letzter Hand," *Heidegger Studies* 2 (1986): 154.
55. See my "Demythologizing Heidegger," in *Philosophy in Canada*, Vol. 1, ed. Fiore Guido (Milliken, Ontario: Agathon Books, 1989) (forthcoming). For an example of employing Heidegger's youthful language in an interpretation of his whole thought, see John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).
56. Gadamer, "Der Eine Weg Martin Heideggers," p. 9.



# Dasein, the Being that Thematizes[1]

ROBERT BRANDOM

## I. Background

DOES the structure of Heidegger's account commit him to understanding Dasein as involving language in principle? I will argue here that he is committed to the claim that the sort of linguistic assertional practice he calls "thematizing" is an essential feature of Dasein, and so, that nothing could be Dasein unless it treats some things as occurrent. To see why this would be an interesting and important result, it is necessary to rehearse some of the basic features that make Heidegger's approach distinctive and original. *Being and Time* can be understood as propounding a normative pragmatism. The explanatory strategy invoked by this expression comprises two distinct commitments. The first regards the relation between the normative and the factual

[1] "*Das thematisierende Seiende, das Dasein*" (364; English 415). All references will be given in this form: the page numbers in the German original of the *Gesamtausgabe* (vol. 2) are given first, and the Macquarrie and Robinson English translation page numbers of *Being and Time* are given thereafter, e.g., (364; English 415).

realms; the second regards the relation between norms taking the explicit form of rules and norms taking the implicit form of proprieties of practice.

In each case the question is one of conceptual and explanatory priority. The philosophical tradition treats the factual as the basic form of the real and seeks to explain the normative by *adding* something, which might generically be called values. What is objectively real has a cloak of subjective values or significances thrown over it by its relation to human interests or desires.[2] By contrast, Heidegger treats as primitive a certain kind of social normative articulation and seeks to define the factual as a special case picked out by *subtracting* something, namely certain kinds of relations to human projects. Again, the philosophical tradition treats norms as canonically codified in the form of explicit *rules* which determine what is correct by *saying* or describing what is correct. Each propriety of *practice*, the grasp of which consists in knowing *how* to do something correctly, is conceived as underwritten by a *principle*, the grasp of which consists in knowing *that* a particular sort of performance is correct. By contrast, Heidegger treats as primitive a certain kind of norm that is *implicit* in practice and seeks to define *explicit* rules, principles, and claims in terms of the practical proprieties of using them.

Heidegger sets out these commitments in the form of an account of the relations between three fundamental ontological categories, or more officially, regions of being within which different sorts of entities are disclosed: Dasein, *Zuhandensein*, and *Vorhandensein*. Dasein is the kind of being

[2]Heidegger formulates his view by opposition to this: "In interpreting we do not, so to speak, throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present-at-hand, we do not stick a value on it" (150; English 191). See also (68; English 97) and (99; English 132).





we ourselves have.[1] Although the task of the whole book is to lay out the basic make-up (*Grundverfassung*) of Dasein, two features may be singled out by way of introduction. First, Dasein is an essentially *social* sort of being. Heidegger's term for our sociality is *Mitsein*, or being-with.[4] Second, an essential structure of Dasein is that it always already finds itself in a *world*.[5] To say this is to say that the ontological categories of Dasein and *Zuhandensein* (availability) are internally related.[6] For apart from others whose way of being is also that of Dasein, the world consists of what is *zuhanden*, that is, ready-to-hand, or available. The available comprises what Heidegger calls equipment (*Zeug*)—things that are used or dealt with in social practices and so are thick with practical proprieties or significances that determine how it is appropriate to treat them. To call something available is to treat it as something that can be used correctly or incorrectly, according to proprieties implicit in practices instituted and pursued by Dasein. Hammers are a paradigm of a kind of entity that exhibits this sort of being—they are properly used in the practice of driving nails, although it is possible to use them as

[1]The section titled "The Theme of the Analytic of Dasein" states "We are ourselves the entity to be analyzed" (41; English 67).

[4]"Dasein in itself is essentially Being-with" (120; English 156). "So far as Dasein is at all, it has Being-with-one-another as its kind of Being" (125; English 163).

[5]"'Being-in' is thus the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state" (54; English 80). "'Dasein' means Being-in-the-world" (165; English 208).

[6]I use *category* here not in Heidegger's technical sense (for *Existenz* is not in that sense a category), but in the sense of "ontological category" that I detail in "Heidegger's Categories in *Being and Time*," which was reprinted in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, pages 45–64. This essay, to which the present one is a companion, is hereafter referred to as "HCBT."

ballast or weapons.[7] The practical norms determining the correct way of using bits of equipment typically relate them to other bits of equipment—hammers to nails, nails to boards, tires to cars, cars to roads, and so on. The world is a holistic totality of such practical normative equipmental involvements.[8]

*Vorhandensein* (occurrence) is the realm of objective facts. It consists of objects that are merely present and of their matter-of-factual, non-normative properties. Treating things as *vorhanden* is taking them to be what they are, independently of any proprieties of practice instituted by Dasein's activities. Thus occurrence is Heidegger's way of talking about what the philosophical tradition talked about under the heading of Reality. What is occurrent differs from what is available in that it is not made to be what it is by being caught up in normative social practices, which situate it with respect to Dasein's projects.[9]

[7]"But the 'indicating' of the sign and the 'hammering' of the hammer are not properties of entities. Anything ready-to-hand is, at the worst, appropriate for some purposes and inappropriate for others" (83; English 114–15). "Serviceability, too, however, as a constitutive state of equipment . . . is not an appropriateness of some entity; it is rather the condition (so far as Being is in question) which makes it possible for the character of such an entity to be defined by its appropriatenesses" (83; English 115).

[8]"As the Being of something ready-to-hand, an involvement is itself discovered only on the basis of the prior discovery of a totality of involvements" (85; English 118). "Being-in-the-world, according to our interpretation hitherto, amounts to a nonthematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality of equipment" (67; English 107).

[9]These projects are not to be understood as explicitly conceived and adopted. "Projecting" is an implicit practical attitude or orientation: "Projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out. The character of understanding as projection is such that the understanding does not grasp thematically that upon which it projects—that is to say, possibilities" (145; English 185).





In *Being and Time* Heidegger's primary complaint against the tradition is that it gives ontological and explanatory pride of place to this category—attempting to understand and explain Dasein, the proprieties Dasein institutes by its social practices, and the equipmental roles defined by those practices in terms of what is merely occurrent.[10] This approach, he thinks, is wrong-headed and doomed to failure. The thought underlying this claim is that if norm-laden practices are taken for granted, it is possible to explain what it is to treat things as matters of fact, while if one starts with matters of fact, norms of all sorts will be unintelligible—construable only in terms of essentially subjective responses to facts.[11] What matters for the present story is how Heidegger pursues the direction of explanation that he endorses, rather than how he thinks the reverse direction can be seen to be defective.

As was already remarked, Heidegger is clear that there is no equipment without Dasein, and no Dasein without equipment. Dasein and *Zuhandensein* mutually presuppose one another as substructures of being-in-the-world. *Vorhandensein*, by contrast, is a derivative category, to be understood and explained in terms of the other two.[12] How is the occurrent derived from the other two sorts of being? This is a long story, for which only the barest sketch can be provided here. In outline, it goes like this: Some of the equipment that is available

[10]"In general our understanding of being is such that every entity is understood in the first instance as occurrent" (225; English 268, translation revised).

[11]I argue for this interpretation of Heidegger's project in HCBT.

[12]". . . the ontological meaning of cognition, which we have exhibited as a *founded* mode of being-in-the-world. To lay bare what is just occurrent and no more, cognition must first penetrate *beyond* what is available in our concern" (71; English 101, translation revised).

in the environing totality of equipmental involvements practically disclosed in the world is specifically *linguistic* equipment. In particular, one sort of equipment is *sentences*, used in practice to make *assertions* or claims. Heidegger calls using sentences as one does in the paradigm case of assertion *thematizing*.[13] The basic understanding of such sentences consists in being able to distinguish in practice between correct and incorrect uses, as with any sort of equipment. The proprieties of practice characteristic of sentence use in thematizing are of three fundamental sorts on Heidegger's account: noninferential uses in making perceptual reports, inferential uses (as premises and conclusions), and interpersonal communicative uses. Grasping the significance of the claims made by sentences consists in practical mastery of these kinds of proprieties of use. This is the practical knowing *how* in terms of which the capacity to thematize explicitly, knowing *that* something is the case, is to be explained.[14]

Ordinarily, Heidegger thinks, a thing is first disclosed to Dasein as available in terms of the practical proprieties governing what it would be correct to *do* with it. Even unfamiliar things first come into our world as equipment we do not know what to do with.[15] Responding to something as merely occurrent requires a certain sort of holding back from practical

[13]E.g., (149; English 189) and (354; English 405).

[14]For details on how to read Heidegger this way, see HCBT.

[15]"The question simply remains as to *how* entities are discovered in this previous encountering, whether as mere things which occur, or rather as equipment which has not yet been understood—as something available with which we have hitherto not known 'how to begin'. And here again, when the equipmental characters of the available are still circumspectly undiscovered, they are not to be Interpreted as bare Thinghood presented for an apprehension of what is just occurrent and no more" (81; English 112, translation revised).





involvement.[16] Instead of treating the thing as available for various sorts of practical uses, one treats it as appropriately responded to *only* by making assertions about it.[17] This is a theoretical rather than a practical response, the difference being marked out by the fact that the assertional or judgmental responses are themselves available or serviceable[18] for formulating the upshot of perception, using as fodder for inferences, or for

[16]"If knowing is to be possible as a way of determining the nature of the occurrent by observing it, then there must be first a *deficiency* in our having-to-do-with the world concernfully. When concern holds back from any kind of producing, manipulating, and the like, it puts itself into what is now the sole remaining mode of Being-in, the mode of just tarrying alongside. This kind of being towards the world is one which lets us encounter entities within-the-world purely in the *way they look*" (61; English 88). "Thematizing Objectifies. It does not first 'posit' the entities, but frees them so that one can interrogate them and determine their character 'Objectively'. Being which Objectifies and which is alongside the occurrent within-the-world, is characterized by a *distinctive kind of making-present*. This making-present is distinguished from the Present of circumspection in that—above all—the kind of discovering which belongs to the science in question awaits solely the discoveredness of the occurrent. We shall not trace further how science has its source in authentic existence. It is enough for now if we understand that the thematizing of entities within-the-world presupposes Being-in-the-world as the basic state of Dasein" (363; English 414, translation revised).

[17]Thus one *can* thematize (make assertions about) what is not present-at-hand: "Even that which is ready-to-hand can be made a theme for scientific investigation. The ready-to-hand can become the 'Object' of a science without having to lose its character as equipment" (361; English 413). Much of *Being and Time* does just that (cf. the title of section 26: "The task of a thematic analysis of Being-in").

[18]"The assertion is something available" (224; English 267, translation revised).

communicating to others. The assertions with which it is appropriate to respond to something perceptible do not depend on the particular practical projects that animate the activities of the assertor (although the practical inferences in which one goes on to use those assertions as premises may well so depend). The holding-back that underlies treating something as merely occurrent, the "just looking" at it, consists in mediating one's practical responses by a level of assertion, the practical proprieties of which swing free of particular practical projects. This is why "occurrence . . . is the specialty of assertion" (158; English 201).[19] It is in this way that know-how, practical mastery of which constitutes specifically linguistic competence, distances objects and states of affairs from the projects of Dasein by responding to them (for instance, perceptually). Knowing-that is founded on knowing-how.

A special case of the thematizing use of sentences is to state *rules*. With respect to this pragmatic commitment to the explanatory priority of norms implicit in practice over those explicit in rules, Heidegger belongs in a box with the later Wittgenstein. For in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein argues that explicit rules cannot be the only form taken by norms, on the basis of the regress that is revealed when it is noticed that following a rule is itself something that can be done correctly or incorrectly. Calling a rule that governs the application of another rule an "interpretation," Wittgenstein argues that "there must be some way of following a rule that does not consist in an interpretation, but in following or

[19] The whole passage reads: "This leveling of the primordial 'as' of circumspective interpretation to the 'as' with which presence-at-hand is given a definite character is the specialty of assertion. Only so does it obtain the possibility of exhibiting something in such a way that we just look at it." (See also [62; English 89] concerning the relation between perception and assertion, which is discussed below in connection with curiosity.)





going against it in practice" (*Philosophical Investigations* 201). The possibility of making norms explicit in the form of rules, which determine what is correct and incorrect by *saying* what does and does not qualify, depends on an underlying possibility of discriminating norms implicit in the practice of *doing* things correctly and incorrectly and responding to such performances nonlinguistically *as* correct and incorrect. Without such practical abilities, rules could not be applied—it cannot be interpretation (in this sense) all the way down.[20]

These, then, are the two components of Heidegger's normative pragmatism: first, understanding the factual in terms of the normative (via the norms governing the use of assertions, which are the only appropriate response to the occurrent as such); and second, understanding government by norms explicit in the form of propositionally statable rules in terms of government by norms implicit in the form of skillful practical discriminations of appropriate and inappropriate performances (in particular, applications to individual unrepeatable cases of the repeatable sentences that express general rules). The first is understanding *Vorhandensein* in terms of *Zuhandensein*, and the second is understanding *Zuhandensein* as in the first instance a matter of social practice rather than individual propositionally contentful cognition or intellectual achievement ("thematizing"). It is natural to understand these priority claims in terms of a "layer cake" model, according to which there could be Dasein and *Zuhandensein* without *Vorhandensein*, which arises from them only if Dasein adopts certain optional practices and practical attitudes, involving the use of certain sorts of sophisticated equipment, namely sentences used to make claims and state rules. This is an understanding according to which the claim that "assertion is

[20] I discuss this line of thought in more detail in the first chapter of *Making It Explicit*.

derived from interpretation and understanding" (160; English 203) invokes derivation in a sense implying the *autonomy* of the underlying layer of "circumspective" (that is, practical) acknowledgments of proprieties in dealing with equipment. The level of assertions, and so of adopting the practical attitude of treating things as occurrent, looks like an optional superstructure, which might be erected on top of human existence (Dasein) and the being of equipment (*Zuhandensein*), but which equally well might not be found along with them.[21] In answering the fundamental question "*By what existential-ontological modifications does assertion arise from circumspective interpretation?*" (157; English 200), Heidegger apparently says nothing that would indicate that, given the sort of being from which they are derived, assertion and presentness *must* arise. It would seem possible, and in the spirit of the enterprise, to suppose that one could coherently take some community to consist of entities with Dasein's kind of being, instituting by their practices a world of *zuhanden* equipment, while not supposing that they can talk, and do so while denying that they treat anything as *vorhanden*. On this reading, Heidegger portrays an autonomous, preconceptual, prepropositional, prelinguistic level of intentionality—namely practical, skill-laden, norm-governed directedness toward equipment treated as available. As being-in-the-world, Dasein can already be discerned at this level. It may or may not be the case for any particular community of existing entities, entities whose way of being is that of Dasein, that on this practical base a theoretical superstructure of conceptual, propositional, linguistic, or in Heidegger's terminology, thematic intentionality, is erected.

[21] In fact, I endorse priority of implicit practical norms over the capacity to make anything explicit in *Making It Explicit*. But I have come to believe that, tempting as it is to attribute this view to Heidegger, as I argue below, he is in fact committed to rejecting it.





Those interpreters of *Being and Time* who take it to be a pragmatist work in something like the dual sense delineated above, most prominently Dreyfus, Haugeland, and Okrent, typically understand the priority Heidegger accords to practical over propositional intentionality according to this "layer cake" model.[22] It is the thesis of this essay that application of this model of the priority doctrine is a mistake —Heidegger is committed to the claim that there is no Dasein (and hence no *Zuhandensein*) without language, without thematizing, without treating things as *vorhanden*. As the passage quoted in the title indicates, Dasein is the being (entity) that thematizes. Another way of putting this claim is to say that the capacity to treat things as extant or occurrent is an *existentiale*, a permanent and constitutive possibility of Dasein. This is not to say that there cannot be norms implicit in social practices without norms explicit in the form of rules, which determine what is correct by saying or describing what is correct, and hence, without linguistic practices including assertion. It is to say that such a prelinguistic community would not count as Dasein. An instructive case in point is Haugeland's rich and original rendering of the norms implicit in the practices that institute equipment. He explains these norms in terms of social constellations of dispositions that qualify as "conformist." He asks us to imagine under this heading creatures who not only conform their behavior to that of other community members in the sense of imitating each other, and so tend to act alike (normally in the sense of typically) in similar circumstances, but also sanction each other's performances, positively and negatively reinforcing responses to stimuli so as to make it more likely that future behavior will conform to the emergent standards.

[22] Cf. Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being in the World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time; John Haugeland, "Heidegger;" Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism*.

*The clusters that coalesce can be called "norms" (and not just groups or types) precisely because they are generated and maintained by censoriousness: the censure attendant on deviation automatically gives the standards (the extant clusters) a* de facto *normative force.* (Haugeland, "Heidegger" 16)

It is in terms of norms implicit in social practice in this sense that he explains the proprieties constitutive of equipment and the constitution of the norm-governed community as the anyone (*das Man*), the conforming individual creatures. Dasein is then identified with this community and any normative structures instituted by it (Haugeland, "Heidegger" 19). My thesis is that although such an account is no doubt of crucial importance in understanding how Heidegger approaches intentionality,[23] it cannot be correct as an account of what Dasein and *Zuhandensein* consist in. For this account can be told about pre- or non-linguistic creatures, as exemplifying an autonomous level of functioning on which the capacity for linguistic practice is causally and conceptually parasitic, and, it will be argued, Heidegger is committed to the claim that anything that does not have language and does not make assertions (and therefore does not treat things as *vorhanden*) cannot qualify as Dasein, and so cannot institute proprieties that qualify as a world of *Zuhandensein*.[24]

[23]I take issue with the reduction of the normative to regularities of behavior and disposition (even to censure) in chapter 1 of *Making It Explicit*, and I would take issue with it also as a reading of Heidegger.

[24]Haugeland does say, "In my pains to avoid any hidden presupposition of mentality or reason, I have spoken exclusively of dispositions, behavior, and know-how—making everything sound 'mindless' and inarticulate. But of course it isn't. Among Dasein's many institutions are those of language" (Haugeland, "Heidegger" 23). The question is thus one of the status of this institution. We have also been told that among





Why not say that one can give a separable account of an autonomous level of practice that, for instance, Dasein's being-in-a-world of equipment consists in, hoping later to add those features required to explain other characteristics of Dasein, for instance its being being an issue for it, or care, which need not be exhibited at the base level? Such an approach is precluded on basic methodological grounds. Heidegger claims that in his discussion of Dasein he is not just doing anthropology, but fundamental ontology. Part of the cash value of this claim must be that he is not merely offering us a set of descriptions, in however rich a vocabulary, which all just happen to be true of us. Rather, his characterizations form a tightly interlocked set of features, no one of which could be exhibited without all the others. When he tells us that Dasein is being-in-the-world, Dasein is its disclosedness, and that Dasein is the entity whose being is an issue for it,[25] for instance, part of the specifically *ontological* force of these claims, what raises them above the merely ontic force of anthropological observations or generalizations, is their internal relation. In effect the commitment being undertaken is that anything that is correctly specified as worlded must therefore also be identified with its disclosedness, and must count as having its being as an issue for it, that nothing whose being is an issue for it could fail to be worlded or to be its disclosedness, and so on. The *existentiale* of Dasein come as a package. Thus to claim that entities could exhibit some of these ways of being without others is to claim that

Dasein's institutions are chemistry, philately, Christmas, and Cincinnati (19). For all Haugeland says here, language could be as optional and late-coming in Dasein's development as these are. It is this possibility that the present reading attempts to close off.

[25]E.g., see (165; English 208), (133; English 171), and (143; English 182).

there is no such thing as Dasein, that Heidegger has gotten it wrong. It is by that same token to cast doubt on one's interpretation of what is required to count as, for example, worlded, or structured by care, relative to an alternate reading that does not permit these characteristics of Dasein's basic constitution to fall apart from one another. If, I will argue here, it can be shown that assertional language is an essential structure of the basic constitution of Dasein, then it will follow that, for Heidegger, nothing can be worlded, and so treat things as equipment available unless it can also treat things as objectively occurrent.

## II. Direct Arguments for Dasein's Having *Sprache*

The basic argument to be presented can be put schematically in four steps:

1. There can be no Dasein without *Rede* (discourse).
2. There can be no *Rede* without *Gerede* (idle talk).
3. There can be no *Gerede* without *Sprache* (language).
4. There can be no *Sprache* without *Aussage* (assertion).

This argument will then be situated within a larger frame, which argues more generally that

5. There can be no Dasein without *Verfallen* (falling).

*Verfallen* exhibits three characteristic substructures, *Gerede*, *Neugier* (curiosity), and *Zweideutigkeit* (ambiguity). *Gerede* is dealt with in the first argument.

To complete the framing argument, it is argued that

6. There can be no *Neugier* without *Aussage*.
7. There can be no *Zweideutigkeit* without *Aussage*.

The conclusion is that

8. There can be no Dasein without *Aussage*.

And so:

9. There can be no Dasein that cannot treat things as *Vorhanden*.

Each of these steps requires explanation and justification.





Assuming for the moment that such justifications can be given, the architectonic commitments attributed by these premises will require rejection of the "layer cake model" of the conceptual priority of the way of being of the available over that of the occurrent, in view of the untenability of the picture of an autonomous stratum of practice in which entities already count as having Dasein's characteristic being and as operating amidst a world of equipment but are not yet taken to be able to talk. The priority thesis must then be understood to address the order of explanation—one cannot understand *Vorhandensein* unless one first understands *Zuhandensein*. The reason for this explanatory priority is that indicated above: to treat something as merely occurrent is to treat it as only appropriately responded to by making the sort of judgments about it that are expressed by assertions (including the judgments that are the output of perception).[26] But such assertions are a kind of equipment, something available, whose use must be understood as governed by proprieties implicit in practice—paradigmatically intrapersonal inference and interpersonal communication. By contrast, the proprieties of practice that institute prelinguistic equipment can be understood in advance of any understanding of specifically linguistic equipment. This can be true even though, as will be argued, unless such prelinguistic proprieties of practice are accompanied by linguistic ones, they will not count as instituting a world, and the instituting entities will not count as having the sort of being characteristic of Dasein.

[26] "In this kind of 'dwelling' as holding-oneself-back from any manipulation or utilization, the perception of the occurrent is consummated. Perception is consummated when one *addresses* oneself to something as something and discusses it as such. What is thus perceived and made determinate can be expressed in propositions, and can be retained and preserved as what has thus been asserted" (62; English 89, translation revised).

## III. No Dasein without *Rede*

Dasein, we are told, is its disclosedness (133; English 171).[27] "Disclosedness" is Heidegger's term for, roughly, Dasein's ontological access to any entity's sort of being. (His term for merely ontic access to entities, as opposed to their being, is "discovery.") The first thing we are told about the structure of disclosedness is that "the fundamental *existentialia* which constitute the being of the 'there' [Dasein], the disclosedness of being-in-the-world, are situatedness [*Befindlichkeit*] and understanding [*Verstehen*]" (160; English 203). "*Existentiale*" is a term Heidegger uses for structures of Dasein's being without which it would not qualify as Dasein. The list of *existentialia* associated with Dasein's disclosedness is given in different forms in different places (more will be said about the other forms later). Almost immediately, though, we are told, with emphasis, that "Discourse [*Rede*] is equiprimordial [*existenzial gleich-ursprünglich*] with situatedness and understanding" (161; English 203). To say this is to say that one cannot have *Befindlichkeit* or *Verstehen* without *Rede*. Since the former are *existentialia*, so is the latter.[28] Thus there is no Dasein without *Rede*.

This much is not in any way a controversial claim. But if it is not controversial that *Rede* is part of the basic constitution of Dasein, then can it not immediately be concluded that language is? After all, *Rede* is the ordinary German word for discourse, for telling, for articulating in language. This conclusion is not immediate, however, for Heidegger uses *Rede* as a technical term, which at least includes, and is

[27] The best discussion of this doctrine is Haugeland's "Dasein's Disclosedness."

[28] At (165; English 209) we hear about "the basic *a priori* structure of discourse as an *existentiale*."





often taken to be limited to, various kinds of prelinguistic articulation. Thus Haugeland offers the following definition:

> *Telling* (Rede) *is the articulation of significance or intelligibility, both in the sense of separating or carving up, and in the sense of expressing in words. The carving up is . . . an essentially public or shared way of distinguishing determinate entities in determinate regards.* ("Dasein's Disclosedness" 64)

Thus *Rede* is the articulation by which a shared world of equipment is instituted by social practice. The gloss, Haugeland suggests, on this is that the basic notion is that of telling, in the sense of distinguishing in practice those performances that are appropriate or in accord with implicit norms from those that are not: "The ur-phenomenon of telling is telling whether behavior does or does not accord with the common norms—in effect telling right from wrong" ("Dasein's Disclosedness" 65). One important consequence of this pragmatic reading of *Rede*, as he goes on to point out, is that "such telling would indeed be the originary articulation of significance, and would, at the same time, be fundamental to the possibility of correctness—for example of assertions." This is an important benefit of the pragmatic interpretation, because Heidegger emphasizes (invoking his sense of "interpretation" as "circumspective," practical, prelinguistic know-how), "Discourse is the articulation of intelligibility. Therefore it underlies both interpretation and assertion" (161; English 204), and "we have seen that assertion is derived from interpretation, and is an extreme case of it . . . . *The existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse or talk* [*Rede*]" (160–61; English 203). Here again, then, we see expressions of the priority thesis concerning the grounding of linguistic practice in prelinguistic know-how, which it is tempting to interpret as commitments to the possibility of an autonomous level of practical circumspective interpretation by Dasein of equipment making up a world of *Zuhandensein*.

Again, the claim to be defended here by contrast is that although such an autonomous level of practice is no doubt possible—talking does not develop *ex nihilo*—it would not be proper to describe it in Heidegger's terminology as characterized by Dasein, being-in-the-world, *Zuhandensein*, or, the presently relevant point, as articulated by *Rede*.

Heidegger says that "The way in which discourse [*Rede*] gets expressed is language [*Sprache*]" (161; English 204). This is compatible with the view that *Rede* comes in two forms, an implicit form in which it consists in practically discriminating the proprieties that institute a world and an optional, derivative form in which those proprieties can be explicitly expressed and discussed. The question is whether it is optional that the articulation that is *Rede* be expressed. The claim that it *must* be explicitly expressed can be understood in either a local or a global sense. In the local sense, the claim would be that no particular practical articulation or discrimination of proprieties could count as discursive (*redend*) unless it was expressed explicitly, that is, in language. In the global sense, the claim would be that no practical articulation or discrimination of proprieties could count as discursive unless *some* such articulations or discriminations are expressed explicitly in language. The stronger local claim would seem to be incompatible with any version of the priority thesis. It is clear that not all "articulation of intelligibility according to significations" (the definition of *Rede*) takes the form of explicit assertions.[29] In any case, it is the weaker, global claim that is

[29]"In discourse the intelligibility of being-in-the-world . . . is articulated according to significations" (162; English 205). It is tempting to identify "significations" with signs and to take this as an endorsement of the exclusively explicit nature of *Rede*. But this would be incorrect. "Significations" is "*Bedeutungen*," which is used to refer to the purely practical references and assignments that articulate the world of equipment. When he talks about the special sort of equipment that consists of actual signs, Heidegger uses "*Zeichen*." We are told explicitly that not all *Rede* has propositional form: "we must inquire into the basic forms in which it is possible to articulate anything understandable, and to do so in accordance with significations: and this articulation must not be confined to entities within-the-world which we cognize by considering them theoretically and which we express in sentences" (165; English 209). This specific wording of the definition of *Rede* cited above is significant, however. "According to significations" is "*bedeutungsmässige*," and the word that Kant uses to talk about norms explicit in the form of rules is "*regelmässige*." Heidegger may be picking up on this usage and thereby emphasizing the second thesis of his normative pragmatism, that norms implicit in practice must be presupposed in explaining those explicit in rules.





to be defended here. Heidegger does seem to say that it is not optional that *Rede* be expressed in this global sense.

> *Because discourse* [Rede] *is constitutive for the being of the there (that is, for situatedness and understanding), while* "Dasein" *means Being-in-the-world,* Dasein as discursive Being-in *has already expressed itself. Dasein has language. Man shows himself as the entity which talks. This does not signify that the possibility of vocal utterance is peculiar to him, but that he is the entity which is such as to discover the world and Dasein itself.* (165; English 208)

Recall the previous argument to the effect that Heidegger should not be telling us about characteristics that Dasein just happens to have, ontic features of some interesting entities, but only about definitive, internally related ontological characteristics. Since it is not optional that Dasein be discursive being-in, it is not optional that it express itself, and so it is not optional that it have language.

Another direct argument is available for the conclusion that there is no *Rede* without *Sprache*. This has to do with the role

of explicit expressions of the articulations comprising *Rede* in *communication*,[30] the role of such communication in being-with, and the role of being-with in being-in-the-world. The claim is that all of these are necessary features of Dasein. Here is the central passage:

*Discoursing or talking is the way in which we articulate "significantly" the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world. Being-with belongs to Being-in-the-world, which in every case maintains itself in some definite way of concernful Being-with-one-another. Such Being-with-one-another is discursive* [redend] *as assenting or refusing* [zu- und absagen], *as demanding, or warning, as pronouncing* [Aussprache], *consulting* [Rücksprache], *or interceding* [Fürsprache], *as "making assertions," and as talking in the way of "giving a talk"* [Redenhalten]. (161; English 204)

Every member of this list of paradigmatic ways in which being-with is articulated discursively is explicitly and essentially

[30] "Discourse which expresses itself is communication [*Mitteilung*]" (168; English 211). We see again that it is not optional that *Rede* be expressed (in the global, not the local sense), for communication is not an optional structure of Dasein. Thus: "For the most part [*zumeist*], discourse [*Rede*] is expressed by being spoken out, and has always been so expressed; it is language [*Sprache*]" (167; English 211). These passages cannot yet be taken to be decisive, however, because they are balanced by others such as: " 'Communication' in which one makes assertions—giving information, for instance —is a special case of that communication which is grasped in principle existentially" (162; English 205). Heidegger is not contradicting himself here, because there is more to language than assertion—not all *Sprache* is *Aussage*. It will be argued below, however, that there is no *Sprache* without *Aussage* (in the global sense that the capacity to talk at all requires the capacity to make assertions).







linguistic. Since being-with is not an optional feature of Dasein, but rather a fundamental characteristic of its *Grundverfassung*, and since *Rede* likewise has this status, the exclusively linguistic character of this botanization of modes of discursive being-with certainly suggests, though it falls short of demonstrating, that there can be no *Rede*, and therefore no Dasein, without *Sprache*.

## IV. *Rede* and *Gerede*

However, the strongest argument for the conclusion that there is no *Rede* (and therefore no Dasein) without *Sprache* is not a direct argument relying on passages such as these, but an indirect one. This proceeds in two steps: There is no *Rede* without *Gerede* (idle talk), and no *Gerede* without *Sprache*. These points will be addressed sequentially. *Gerede* is a special form of *Rede*: "Discourse, which belongs to the essential state of Dasein's Being and has a share in constituting Dasein's disclosedness, has the possibility of becoming idle talk" (169; English 213). The first question is whether it is optional that this possibility be realized. Could entities qualify as articulating practical significances in the form of *Rede* if they never articulate them in the form of *Gerede*? Again it is important to distinguish two ways in which this question can be understood. It is clear that not every articulation according to significations takes the form of *Gerede*. Thus the stronger, local form of the claim that there is no *Rede* without *Gerede* does not hold—not every bit of *Rede* is a bit of *Gerede*. Nonetheless it will be claimed that the weaker, global form of the dependence claim does hold—unless some articulations take the form of *Gerede*, none count as *Rede*—and so the creatures in question, although they might by their social practices institute norms that they implicitly acknowledge as governing their performances, would not count as Dasein.

What sort of modification of *Rede* is *Gerede*? The first point is that *Gerede* is just the *everyday* (*alltäglich*) form of *Rede*. "The expression 'idle talk' [*Gerede*] is not to be used here in a 'disparaging' signification . . . it signifies a positive phenomenon which constitutes the kind of Being of everyday Dasein's understanding and interpreting" (167; English 211).[31] The initial question thus becomes whether it is optional that *Rede* sometimes appear in its everyday form. Heidegger says of *Gerede*:

*This everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extrication. In it, out of it, and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting, and communicating, all rediscovering and appropriating anew, are performed.* (169; English 213)

Thus *Gerede*, the everyday form of *Rede*, forms the background for the other forms. It is not an optional species, but a fundamental one. The reason for this privileged status is that "idle talk is the kind of Being that belongs to Being-with-one-another itself" (177; English 221). Being-with, of course, is itself not optional. It is a fundamental characteristic of Dasein's *Grundverfassung*.

These passages make it clear that there is no *Rede* (and therefore no Dasein) without its everyday form, *Gerede*. However, in order to see that *Gerede* is an essentially *linguistic* phenomenon, it is necessary to look more closely at what idle talk is, as the everyday form in which significances are articulated. Its essence is, as the word suggests, *gossip*. Here is the central passage to be unpacked:

[31]Talk of interpreting (a form of understanding) is talk of *Rede*, for *Rede* underlies all these forms of intelligibility: "Discourse is the articulation of intelligibility. Therefore it underlies both interpretation and assertion" (161; English 203–04).





*What is said-in-the-talk* [das Geredete] *as such, spreads in wider circles and takes on an authoritative character. Things are so because one says so. Idle talk is constituted by just such gossiping and passing the word along—a process by which its initial lack of grounds to stand on* [Bodenständigkeit] *becomes aggravated to complete groundlessness* [Bodenlosigkeit]. (168; English 212)

*Gerede* is fundamentally a structure of authority, a way in which justificatory grounds can be treated in practice. (This is one of many places where it can seem that Heidegger is sinning against his own precept that *Gerede* is not to be taken in a disparaging sense. This impression ought to be alleviated by the realization that, although Heidegger is far from recommending this structure of authority, he thinks that it provides the pervasive background against which alone it is possible to understand the possibility of more authentic justificatory structures.) *Gerede* consists in the thoughtless passing on of what is said-in-the-talk, *das Geredete*. Understanding what this means requires reverting to the fundamental structure of *Rede*:

*The items constitutive for discourse are: what the discourse is about (what is talked about)* [das Worüber der Rede (das Beredete)]; *what is said-in-the-talk, as such* [das Geredete als solches]; *the communication* [die Mitteilung]; *and the making-known* [die Bekundung]. (162; English 206)

Only the first two of these, what is talked about and what is said-in-the-talk, *das Beredete* and *das Geredete*, matter here. The other two can be understood in terms of them, since communication is the passing along of *das Geredete*, and the making-known is the establishment of a relation to *das Beredete* by such passing along. What is said-in-the-talk and what is talked about are the two essential elements in the existence of specifically *linguistic* contents, two aspects of a

distinctive kind of equipment, equipment employed in order to communicate and make-known.

Thus these elements have all been introduced before we ever hear about idle talk. What-is-said-in-the-talk is introduced, without using that particular term, when we first hear about assertion, as the essence of the role assertion plays in communication:

*As something communicated, that which has been put forward in the assertion is something that Others can "share" with the person making the assertion, even though the entity which he has pointed out and to which he has given a definite character is not close enough for them to grasp and see it. That which is put forward in the assertion is something which can be passed along in "further retelling." There is a widening of the range of that mutual sharing which sees.*[32] (155; English 197)

Again before we are introduced to *Gerede*, we hear about the other structural element and its relation to the first:

*Talking is talk about something* [Reden ist Rede über]. *What the discourse is about is a structural item that it necessarily possesses; for discourse helps to constitute the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world, and in its own structure it is modeled upon this basic state of Dasein. In any talk or discourse, there is* something said-in-the-talk *as such* [ein Geredetes als solches] *whenever one wishes, asks, or expresses oneself about something. In this "something said," discourse communicates.* (162; English 205)

It is possible to understand *Gerede* in terms of these two structural elements, *das Geredete* and *das Beredete*. *Gerede* is discourse

[32] Notice that communicating by asserting is the sharing of seeing, that is, of treating things as occurrent.





that pays attention only to *das Geredete*, to what is said-in-the-talk, but not to what the talk is about:

*What is said-in-the-talk* [Geredeten] *gets understood; but what the talk is about is understood only approximately and superficially. We have* the same thing *in view, because it is* in the same *averageness that we have a common understanding of what is said.* (168; English 212)

It will emerge that for linguistic equipment genuinely to be in play, both structural elements of saying must in fact be present—without them no genuine contents are instituted by the practice of using them to communicate, and so no knowledge or information is actually shared by passing them around. What is distinctive of *Gerede* is not that *das Beredete*, what is talked about, is absent, but rather that its crucial contribution to the authority structure distinctive of talking is not acknowledged by those who are nonetheless dependent on that structure.

To understand exactly what implicit presuppositions of linguistic practice *Gerede* fails to acknowledge, it is helpful to apply a model of the structure of authority that is distinctive of specifically linguistic equipment.[33] Declarative sentences, which are equipment for asserting, are governed by two different dimensions of authority, one corresponding to their use in *communication*, the other to their use in *inference*. These correspond to two different ways in which one can become entitled to the sort of propositionally articulated commitment

[33] The case that this general model is found in *Being and Time* is argued in detail in HCBT. Only the barest sketch of this argument can be presented here. I undertake, rather than attribute to Heidegger, commitment to a recognizable, similar model in the first four chapters of *Making It Explicit*.

that is expressed by an assertion. By the first mechanism, commitments can become shared, spreading from one individual to another, as the speaker who expresses an assertion communicates to and possibly infects an audience. In this way, entitlement to make a claim can be inherited by the consumer of an assertion from its producer. In such inheritance of entitlement by communication, the content of the commitment is preserved intact and merely transferred. However, this is not the only way in which an individual can become entitled to a claim. It is also possible to justify a commitment inferentially by exhibiting it as a consequence of further premises to which one is committed and entitled. The particular content determines what follows from commitment to that content, and what that content follows from, what it justifies and what justifies it. That it is caught up in such inferences both as premise and as conclusion is what makes it a specifically *propositional* (or assertible) content at all. That it exhibits the particular inferential grounds and consequences that it does makes it the particular determinate content that it is—settling, for instance, what information it conveys, the significance that undertaking a commitment with that content would have for what else one is committed and entitled to. The first, or communicational, mechanism is *inter*personal, *intra*content inheritance of entitlement to a propositional commitment. The second, or inferential, mechanism is *intra*personal, *inter*content inheritance of entitlement to a propositional commitment (since the contents of premises and conclusions will differ in any inference that is nontrivial in the sense of being available to do justificatory work). The functions performed by both mechanisms are essential to the use of sentences as equipment for expressing propositional commitments in the form of assertions. Without the articulation provided by proprieties governing the practice of inferring, including inferences from the commitments that agents find themselves with perceptually, sentences would not express





determinate propositional contents at all. Without acknowledgment in practice of the propriety of inheriting entitlement to claims from the assertions of others, there would be no communication of information, and assertion would be socially idle, instituting no sort of equipment at all.

With this conceptual apparatus, it is possible to characterize straightforwardly the practical attitude Heidegger calls *Gerede*. *Gerede* consists in acknowledging only the communicative structure of authority and not the inferential. "What-is-said-in-the-talk" is passed along, but never grounded in "what-is-talked-about"—it does not have to answer to any justificatory demands beyond a communicational provenance. Those repeating a claim they overhear do not take personal responsibility for it, merely deferring to what "they" (*das Man*) say:

> *The fact that something has been said groundlessly, and then gets passed along in further retelling, amounts to perverting the act of disclosing* [Erschliessen] *into an act of closing off* [Verschliessen]. *For what is said is always understood proximally as "saying" something—that is, an uncovering something. Thus, by its very nature, idle talk is a closing-off, since to go back to the ground of what is talked about is something which it* leaves undone. (169; English 213)

Thus the function of what is talked about, *das Beredete*, is to *ground* the *authority* of the contents that are communicated. Taking a claim back to its ground is justifying it in some way *other* than by appeal to what others say. It is taking responsibility for it oneself, justifying it by appeal to other claims, including but not limited to perceptually acquired ones, that the individual also takes responsibility for. *Gerede* is a practical stance that ignores such grounding in *das Beredete*, and cleaves only to *das Geredete*, ignoring grounding in favor of just passing things along. The trouble is that entitlement can

be inherited from, and responsibility deferred to, another only if the other individual is entitled or can fulfill the justificatory responsibility implicit in making a claim. If everyone adopts the attitude of *Gerede*, and defers responsibility without accepting it, then all of the titles supposedly passed around by communicating are defective and empty. That is, in the words quoted above:

> *What is said-in-the-talk* [das Geredete] *as such, spreads in wider circles and takes on an authoritative character. Things are so because one says so. Idle talk is constituted by just such gossiping and passing the word along—a process by which its initial lack of grounds to stand on* [Bodenständigkeit] *becomes aggravated to complete groundlessness* [Bodenlosigkeit]. (168; English 212)

*Gerede* is the everyday, inauthentic version of *Rede* precisely because of the failure to take personal responsibility that is its essence. To come into an authentic practical relation to one's commitments is to take on responsibility for justifying them, rather than deferring it or evading it by appeal to what everyone (*das Man*) says. One always already finds oneself "falling," that is, equipped with and constituted by a set of commitments one just finds oneself with, without in general being able to justify them by grounding them in what they are about. This is why the practice of *Gerede* is the background out of which every authentic claiming and justifying must arise and from which it must distinguish itself.[34] To undertake responsibility oneself is to acknowledge in practice a basic ontological feature of Dasein—that it comes in what Haugeland calls "units of accountability," or "primitive loci of accountability (*je meines*)": "Heidegger places this structure, which he calls 'in-each-case-mineness'

[34] As in the passage quoted above from (169; English 213).





(*Jemeinigkeit*), among Dasein's most fundamental characteristics" (Haugeland, "Heidegger" 21, 24).[35] *Gerede* precisely refuses to assign accountability for the propriety of a claim to any particular individual, deferring demands for justification instead to the general practice, appealing to "what one says" or "what is said." In fact, however, the public social practice of communicating and the undertaking of individual responsibility presuppose and complement one another. Unless both were always already in play, no genuinely contentful claims (or equipment for asserting and informing) would be instituted at all. *Gerede* exclusively acknowledges the contribution of the public communicative dimension, while ignoring that of *Jemeinigkeit* (here the individual undertaking of justificatory responsibility). One thing lost when the dual structure of authority characteristic of claiming is collapsed by *Gerede* into a single dimension is *experience* (in something like Hegel's sense), in which claims and concepts are winnowed and groomed as the commitments one undertakes responsibility for oneself (including those one finds oneself with perceptually, and their inferential consequences) are confronted by those one would be entitled to pick up from the assertions of others. It is the interplay of these two dimensions of authority that makes it possible for what it is correct to say to exhibit a kind of independence both from what I happen to be committed to and from what others happen to be saying. This is answering

[35] Heidegger introduces the idea in the first two sentences of the body of part I of *Being and Time*, "We Are Ourselves the Entities to Be Analysed: The Being of any such entity is *in each case mine* [*je meines*]" (42; English 67). He says just a bit further along: "Because Dasein has *in each case mineness* [*Jemeinigkeit*], one must always use a *personal* pronoun when one addresses it: 'I am,' 'you are'" (42; English 68). (I'm not sure how well chemistry, Christmas, and philately score on this criterion for being cases of Dasein.)

to the way the objects are, and, in this sense, being about objects. This *objectivity* is what Heidegger talks about as assertions representing things as occurrent, as factual and constraining in a different way from the social proprieties of practice that institute equipment, by settling a common way in which one uses (that is, ought to use) a hammer.[36]

It should be clear at this point that *Gerede* is a thoroughly *linguistic* phenomenon, indeed a specifically *assertional* one. The concept of gossip cannot be made sense of in prelinguistic terms. The distinction between communication and inference as two structures of authority—passing along what is said-in-the-talk (*das Geredete*), and taking individual responsibility for grounding what is said in what the talk is about (*das Beredete*)—defines equipment for making and communicating propositionally contentful *claims*. Indeed, the specific practical failure to comprehend this dual structure of authority that Heidegger identifies with *Gerede* (focusing on *das Geredete* to the exclusion of *das Beredete*) amounts to misunderstanding the distinctly linguistic assertional equipment employed in expressing and communicating a discursive articulation of implicit significances by assimilating it to ordinary equipment such as hammers. The proprieties concerning the latter are exhausted by how one uses a hammer—there is only "what one does with hammers," in the sense of how it is appropriate for anyone to use a hammer. The public proprieties one picks up from others are all there is to such nonlinguistic equipment—if one uses hammers as others do, then one uses them correctly. *Gerede* fails to appreciate how the dual structure of authority governing the use of equipment for making

[36] These few remarks cannot pretend to be more than an indication of the region within which we should look for an account of objectivity. I discuss the issue further in HCBT and in much greater detail in chapter 8 of *Making It Explicit*.





assertions differs from the unidimensional structure governing the use of prelinguistic equipment. Thus *Gerede* is a linguistic phenomenon involving the use of assertions. Since it has already been argued that there is no *Rede* without *Gerede* (in the global, rather than the local sense), and no Dasein without *Rede*, it follows that to take something as exhibiting the kind of being Heidegger calls Dasein is to take it to be a linguistic entity, one that can make assertions, and so one that can treat things as occurrent.

## V. Falling: *Gerede*, *Neugier*, *Zweideutigkeit*

This argument concerning the linguistic and assertional nature of *Gerede*, the matrix of everydayness out of which the expression of other forms of the articulation of intelligibility must arise, can be confirmed and extended by considering it in the larger framework in which the discussion of *Gerede* occurs. Recorded at the close of the sections of division 1 that are being discussed, Heidegger offers the following summary:

> *Our theme has been the ontological constitution of the disclosedness which essentially belongs to Dasein. The Being of that disclosedness is constituted by situatedness* [Befindlichkeit], *understanding* [Verstehen], *and discourse* [Rede]. *Its everyday kind of being is characterized by idle talk* [Gerede], *curiosity* [Neugier], *and ambiguity* [Zweideutigkeit]. *These show us the movement of falling* [Verfallen].[37] (180; English 224, translation revised)

[37] Also, "Idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity characterize the way in which, in an everyday manner, Dasein is its 'there'—the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world. In these, and in the way they are interconnected in their being, there is revealed a basic kind of Being which belongs to everydayness [*Alltäglichkeit*]; we call this the '*falling*' [*Verfallen*] of Dasein. This term does not express any negative evaluation" (175; English 219–20).

Falling is the everyday form of disclosedness, and the relation between *Gerede* and *Rede* is simply a special case of the relation between falling and disclosedness. As we saw that, in the particular case, there is no *Rede* without *Gerede* (in the global rather than the local sense), so, in the general case, there is no disclosedness without falling. "Being-in-the-world is always fallen" (181; English 225). As we saw that in the particular case, *Gerede* is a thoroughly linguistic phenomenon—depending on the use of sentences as equipment for communication by assertion—so is it in the general case for the other forms of everyday disclosedness: curiosity and ambiguity.

Consider first curiosity, which translates *Neugier*, literally "greed for what is new." It is associated with a "tendency just to perceive" (172; English 216) and is introduced as the everyday form of understanding (just as *Gerede* is the everyday form of *Rede*):

*In our analysis of understanding* [Verstehen] *and of the disclosedness of the "there" in general, we have . . . designated the disclosedness of being-in as Dasein's clearing, in which it first becomes possible to have something like sight. Our conception of "sight" has been gained by looking at the basic kind of disclosure which is characteristic of Dasein—namely, understanding. The basic state of sight shows itself in a peculiar tendency-of-Being which belongs to everydayness—the tendency towards "seeing." We designate this tendency by the term "curiosity"* [Neugier], *which characteristically is not confined to seeing, but expresses the tendency towards a peculiar way of letting the world be encountered by us in perception.* (170; English 214)

Three features of perception are of interest here. First, merely perceiving involves bracketing one's practical interests and concerns with proprieties of action. Second, this bracketing is accomplished by making claims—the output of perception for Heidegger is an assertion. As has been pointed out,





assertions are available as equipment for inference, both practical and theoretical. That is, one responds appropriately to assertions as such by drawing conclusions from them, either using them to justify nonsentential performances or further assertions. But their appropriateness as responses to an observable situation are not hostage to any particular practical project. Third, responding to things perceptually, by making noninferential reports (which are themselves then available for further inferences), is treating them as occurrent. We find all three themes combined in an earlier passage dealing with perception:

*In this kind of "dwelling" as a holding-oneself-back from any manipulation or utilization, the* perception *of the occurrent is consummated. Perception is consummated when one* addresses *oneself to something as something and* discusses *it as such. What is thus perceived and made determinate can be expressed in propositions, and can be retained and preserved as what has thus been asserted.* (62; English 89)

Adopting the attitude of perceiving can be done authentically, when the ultimate concern is with understanding, or it can be inauthentic, a form of falling, as curiosity, when the assertions it results in are employed only in a kind of inferential play. (In the discussion of ambiguity below, this sort of inferential play will be called "surmising" [*ahnen*]).

*When curiosity has become free, however, it concerns itself with seeing, not in order to understand what is seen . . . but* just *in order to see it. It seeks novelty only in order to leap from it anew to another novelty. It concerns itself with a kind of knowing, but just in order to have known.* (172; English 216–17)

It should be clear that curiosity, no less than *Gerede*, is, for Heidegger, a phenomenon that presupposes language, specifically

assertional language, and so the capacity to treat things as occurrent. As a form of falling, it amounts to an inauthentic way of treating things as occurrent. It contrasts with science, which is an authentic way of understanding things as merely present.[38] Each of these depends on the possibility of responding to things by making claims about them.

The third form of fallen disclosedness, ambiguity, is equally a linguistic affair. By this term Heidegger refers to a way of talking about things that both evades any genuine search for understanding and separates itself in principle from the possibility of action. Ambiguity is a kind of *speaking*, which substitutes for actual understanding:

*When, in our everyday being-with-one-another, we encounter the sort of thing which is accessible to everyone, and about which anyone can say anything, it soon becomes impossible to decide what is disclosed in a genuine understanding, and what is not. This ambiguity [Zweideutigkeit] extends not only to the world, but just as much to Being-with-one-another as such, and even to Dasein's Being towards itself. Everything looks as if it were genuinely understood, genuinely taken hold of, genuinely spoken, though at bottom it is not.* (173; English 217)

Falling into social practices embodying ambiguity involves holding back from action in a stronger sense than merely making

[38]"The kind of discovering which belongs to the science in question awaits solely the discoveredness of the occurrent. This awaiting of discoveredness has its existentiell basis in a *resoluteness* by which Dasein projects itself towards its potentiality-for-Being in the 'truth'. This projection is possible because Being-in-the-truth makes up a definite way in which Dasein may exist. We shall not trace further how science has its source in authentic existence" (369; English 414, translation revised).





assertions does. Indeed, the practices instituting ambiguity demand that one refuse to commit oneself to assertions. For these can be used as premises for inferences, including the practical inferences whose conclusions are actions and commitments to act. Instead, one merely *entertains* claim contents, employing them only in surmises.

*Even supposing that what "they" have surmised and scented out should someday be actually translated into deeds, ambiguity has already taken care that interest in what has been realized will promptly die away. Indeed, this interest persists, in a kind of curiosity and idle talk, only so long as there is a possibility of a non-committal just-surmising-with-someone-else. When confronted with the carrying-through of what "they" have surmised together, idle talk readily establishes that "they" "could have done that too." In the end, idle talk is even indignant that what it has surmised and constantly demanded now* actually *happens. In that case, indeed, the opportunity to keep on surmising has been snatched away. In the ambiguity of the way things have been publicly interpreted, talking about things ahead of the game and making surmises about them curiously, gets passed off as what is really happening, while taking action and carrying something through get stamped as something merely subsequent and unimportant.* (174; English 218)

The cash value of this is that the claim contents are employed only in *hypothetical* reasoning, reasoning of the "what if" sort. Formally this means that they appear not as propositions with assertional force, to which the speaker is undertaking a commitment, but only as embedded as the unasserted antecedents of asserted conditionals. However, the claim contents that appear thus embedded acquire their contents from their assertional use. In particular, one must be able to make actual inferences using an assertion as a premise in order to be able to use a conditional in which that same content appears

unasserted. For the conditional merely makes explicit, in the form of a claim, what is implicit in the actual performing of an inference. The possibility of merely surmising is thus a sophisticated, latecoming possibility, one that is built on and depends on the capacity to take responsibility for ordinary assertions, which are available, as mere surmises are not, for employment in practical inferences leading to action. The practical mistake underlying falling as ambiguity consists in treating this parasitic form of discourse as if it were autonomous, a game one could play though one played no other.

Thus all of *Gerede*, *Neugier*, and *Zweideutigkeit* are for Heidegger essentially linguistic phenomena—further, ones that depend on the capacity to make assertions, and so to treat things as occurrent. These are the essential substructures of *Verfallen*, which is an *existentiale* of Dasein. Specifically, they are the fallen forms of Dasein's disclosedness, and Dasein is its disclosedness. Thus there is no Dasein which does not fall into these practices, and hence no Dasein that cannot and does not make assertions and treat things as occurrent.

The widespread interpretive impression to the contrary among readers of *Being and Time* is the result of misunderstanding three sorts of passages. The first sort asserts the ontological priority of *Zuhandensein* over *Vorhandensein*. These passages are to be understood in terms of explanatory priority—that assertion is to be understood as a kind of equipment (assertions are something available[39] [224; English 267]), while equipment is not to be understood in terms of matter-of-factual presence plus something. This does not entail that it is coherent to describe a situation in which Dasein has the capacity to treat things as *zuhanden* and not to treat things as *vorhanden*. The second sort of passage insists that there can be

[39] This view of Heidegger's treatment of assertion is not common currency. I argue for it in HCBT.





cases of circumspective understanding, and even interpretation, which do not take the form of assertion, or it makes the same sort of claim of priority for interpretation over assertion.[40] Here it is necessary to keep in mind the distinction between local independence —it must be admitted that not all cases of interpretation are cases of assertion—and the global claim that the capacity to interpret could exist without being accompanied by the capacity to assert. These passages do not support the stronger, global claim, which is the one being denied here. Also, it is not denied that creatures that do not qualify as Dasein, because they do not have *Rede*, *Gerede*, and so on, might nonetheless have practices that institute something a lot like equipment and do something a lot like interpreting according to it. It is claimed that such creatures would not qualify as Dasein, and so, given the package-deal that Heidegger's ontological claims involve, that what they institute cannot qualify as *Zuhandensein*, and what they are doing is not strictly interpreting. Finally, there are passages that point out that there is more to talking than asserting—that not all *Sprache* is *Aussage*, because there is also wishing, commanding, and so on.[41] Again, however, these passages do not speak against the global claim that one could not have the capacity to do these things unless one also had the capacity to assert, though of course not all instances of exercising the one capacity are instances of exercising the other.

The conclusion, then, is that when Heidegger talks about Dasein, he is talking about a kind of being that essentially involves the capacity to use language. More particularly, it essentially involves the capacity to use assertional language, that is, to make claims whose correctness as claims does not depend

[40] E.g., (149; English 189–90), (154; English 195), (158; English 201), (160–61; English 203), and (223; English 266).

[41] E.g., (162; English 205), (161; English 204), and (165–66; English 209).

on the particular projects of those who make them. Thus it essentially involves the capacity to treat things as occurrent. Heidegger is indeed a normative pragmatist in the sense of the two theses stated at the opening of this essay. But the sort of entity about which he is such a pragmatist is, as the passage quoted in the title puts it, "Dasein, the being (entity) that thematizes."[4]

[4]Special thanks are due to John Haugeland for many conversations and much assistance with the topics discussed here, to Bill Blattner, to my fellow staff members, and to the participants at the NEH Summer Institute on Heidegger and Davidson during which the original version of this paper was written, and to the NEH for supporting that form of Dasein.

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# *Heidegger on Being a Person*

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This paper presents a non-standard and rather free-wheeling interpretation of *Being and Time,* with emphasis on the first division.[1] I make Heidegger out to be less like Husserl and/or Sartre than is usual, and more like Dewey and (to a lesser extent) Sellars and the later Wittgenstein. My central point will be Heidegger's radical divergence from the Cartesian-Kantian tradition regarding the fundamental question: What is a person?

According to Aristotle, man is a logical or "word-using" animal, a political or "community-participating" animal, and a featherless biped. In a sense easier to appreciate than to explain, the last is only incidental, while the first two are important; but those two are not our only important differentia. People (and probably only people) make and use tools, play games, judge themselves and others critically, and develop cultural traditions. It may seem that apes and social insects share some of these characteristics, at least primitively; yet people are clearly quite distinctive. A satisfactory account of what it is to be a person would expose the roots of this distinction, thereby showing why certain differentia are important, and others only incidental.

For instance, Christian and modern philosophers interpreted Aristotle's "logical" as "rational," and proposed this rationality as our fundamental distinction. Thus Descartes held that people can talk *because* they can ratiocinate; and he could well have said the same for making and using tools. Similarly, Hobbes tried both to explain and to justify our living in a commonwealth by showing that it is rational. I see Heidegger, on the other hand, as starting from Aristotle's second definition—trying, in effect, to ground all other important differentia on our basic communal nature.

But how can we conceive animals that are "political" in the relevant sense, without presupposing that they are rational or word-using? My reconstruction of Heidegger's answer to this question is the foundation of my interpretation. Imagine a community of versatile and interactive creatures, not otherwise specified except that they are *conformists*.

"Conformism" here means not just imitativeness (monkey see, monkey do), but also censoriousness—that is, a positive tendency to see that one's neighbors do likewise, and to suppress variation. This is to be thought of as a complicated behavioral disposition, which the creatures have by nature ("wired in"). It presupposes in them a capacity to react differentially (e.g., perception), and also some power to alter one another's dispositions more or less permanently (compare reinforcement, punishment, etc.). But it does not presuppose thought, reasoning, language, or any other "higher" faculty.[2]

The net effect of this conformism is a systematic peer pressure within the community, which can be viewed as a kind of mutual attraction among the various members' behavioral dispositions. Under its influence, these dispositions draw "closer" to each other, in the sence that they become more similar; that is, the community members tend to act alike (in like circumstances). The result is analogous to that of gregariousness among range animals: given only their tendency to aggregate, they will tend also to form and maintain distinct herds. Other factors (including chance) will determine how many herds form, of what sizes, and where; gregariousness determines only that there will be herds—distinguishable, reidentifiable clusters of animals, separated by clear gaps where there are no animals (save the odd stray).

When behavioral dispositions aggregate under the force of conformism, it isn't herds that coalesce, but *norms*. Other factors (including chance) will determine the number of norms, how narrow (strict) they are, and where they are in the "space" of feasible behavior; conformism determines only that there will be norms—distinct, enduring clusters of dispositions in behavioral feasibility space, separated in that space by clear gaps where there are no dispositions (save the odd stray). Like herds, norms are a kind of "emergent" entity, with an identity and life of their own, over and above that of their constituents. New animals slowly replace the old, and thus a single herd can outlast many generations; likewise, though each individual's dispositions eventually pass away, they beget their successors in conformist youth, and thereby the norms are handed down to the generations.

The clusters that coalesce can be called "norms" (and not just groups or types) precisely because they are generated and maintained by censoriousness; the censure attentant on deviation automatically gives the standards (the extant clusters) a *de facto* normative force. Out-of-step behavior is not just atypical, but abnormal and unacceptable; it is what one is "not supposed to" do, and in that sense improper. Norms should not be confused with conventions (in David Lewis', 1969, sense), which are "tacit" or "as if" agreements, where the parties have settled on a certain arranged behavior pattern, for mutual benefit. Though nothing is implied about the origin of these arrangements, their persistence is explained by showing how, for each individual, it is





rational to go along with whatever pattern is already established. The difference between norms and conventions lies in this explanatory appeal: conformism does not depend on any rational or interest-maximizing decisions (and thus the norms themselves need not be beneficial). Also, insofar as conventions depend on rational self-interest, they forfeit the normative force of norms.

The total assemblage of norms for a conforming community largely determines the behavioral dispositions of each non-deviant member; in effect, it defines what it is to *be* a "normal" member of the community. Heidegger calls this assemblage the *anyone*.[3] (Perhaps Wittgenstein meant something similar by "forms of life.") I regard it as the pivotal notion for understanding *Being and Time*.

Unlike a scatter of herds, the anyone is elaborately organized and structured, because the norms that make it up are highly interdependent. It is crucial that what get normalized are not, strictly speaking, actual instances of behavior, but rather dispositions to behave, contingent on the circumstances. Thus, norms have a kind of "if-then" structure, connecting various sorts of circumstance to various sorts of behavior. It follows that the conforming community (in the differential responses of normal behavior and normal censorship) must effectively categorize both behavior and behavioral circumstances into various distinct sorts. We say that the anyone *institutes* these sorts.

Imagine, for instance, that the rules of chess were not explicitly codified, but were observed only as a body of conformists norms—"how one acts" when in chess-playing circumstances. Thus, it is proper (socially acceptable) to move the king in any of eight directions, but only one square at a time. For this to be a norm, players and teacher/censors must be able to "tell" (respond differentially, depending on) which piece is the king, what the squares and directions are, what counts as a move, and so on. According to other norms, the king starts on a given square, must be protected whenever attacked, cannot cross a threatened square, can castle under certain conditions, etc. The important point is that it is the *same* king, the same instituted sort, that's involved in each norm; hence, the norms themselves are interrelated in depending on the same sorting of circumstances. We call a sort which is involved in many interrelated norms a *role*—e.g., the role of the king in chess. Many norms are also related through the sorting of squares, moves, threats, other kinds of pieces and what have you; obviously, in fact, all the norms and roles of chess are bound up in a deeply interdependent bundle.

Heidegger makes these points in terms of the equipment and paraphernalia of everyday life; but the upshot is the same. Hammers, nails, boards, and drills, screwdrivers, screws, and glue are all bound together in a (large) nexus of intertwined roles, instituted by the norms of carpentry practice; and that's what makes them what they are.

Consider what marks off our use of tools from the uses apes sometimes make of sticks, or ants of aphids. It isn't that people use things more cleverly, or more effectively, or that only we use them to fashion other things, though all of these may be true. The main difference is that tools have proper uses—for each tool, there is "what it's for." If an ape uses a stick to get bananas, whether cleverly or not, whether successfully or not, it has in no sense used it either properly or improperly. You or I, on the other hand, might use a screwdriver properly to drive in screws, or improperly to carve graffiti on the subway wall; and either way, the propriety is independent of our cleverness or success. One misues (or abuses) a screwdriver to gouge walls—that's not what screwdrivers are for. An ape could not misuse a stick, no matter what it did.

Being a screwdriver, like being a chess-king, is being that which plays a certain role, in relation to other things with inter-determined roles. These mutually defining role relations are constitutive of equipment or paraphernalia as such. Though Heidegger distinguishes and names quite a few varieties (especially sections 15-17), we need only his generic term, *referral*.[4]

> Taken strictly, there never "is" *an* equipment. . . . In the structure [essential to equipment] there lies a *referral* of one thing to another. . . . Equipment always accords with its [own] equipmentality *by* belonging to other equipment: pen, nib, ink, blotter, table, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room. (p. 68)[5]

The totality of all paraphernalia *cum* referral relations is called the "referral nexus of significance"; but since paraphernalia is taken broadly enough to include practically everything with which we ordinarily work, cope, or bother (except other people), this totality is tantamount, in fact, to the everyday world.

The everyday world, of course, is not the universe or the planet Earth, but rather the "world" of daily life and affairs—the world which has the business world and the wide world of sports as specialized portions.[6] It is essentially a cultural product, given determinate character by—instituted by—the norms of the conformists who live in it.

> The anyone itself . . . articulates the referral nexus of significance. (p. 129)

This is a central thesis of *Being and Time*, which I venture to sum up in a memorable slogan: *All constitution is institution*.

Language, not surprisingly, is entirely on a par with the (rest of the) everyday world, as fundamentally instituted and determined by conformist norms. This is one area, however, where recent "social practice" accounts are decidedly more sophisticated than *Being and Time*; so I rest with quoting two passages exhibiting the basic idea:





> But signs are above all themselves equipment, whose specific equipmental character consists in *indicating*. . . . Indicating can be defined as a "species" of referral. (p. 77)

and

> [The referral nexus of] significance. . . harbors within itself the ontological condition for the possibility . . . [of disclosing] "signification," on which are founded in turn the possible being of word and language. (p. 87; compare p. 161)

The important point is that linguistic forms are understood as (special) equipment, and hence the word/object reference relations are just a special case of interequipmental referral relations—which suggests another slogan: *All intentionality is instituted referral*.

We are at last in a position to address the fundamental question for any interpretation of *Being and Time*: What is *Dasein*? According to the text, the anyone (pp. 126-30), the world (pp. 64, 364, and 380), language (p. 166), and even the sciences (p. 11) all have "*Dasein's* kind of being." We can make sense of this astonishing diversity if we understand *Dasein* to be the anyone and everything instituted by it: a vast intricate pattern—generated and maintained by conformism—of norms, normal dispositions, customs, sorts, roles, referral relations, public institutions, and so on.[7] On this reading, the anyone, the (everyday) world, and language are different coherent "subpatterns"within the grand pattern that is *Dasein*; they have *Dasein's* kind of being because each of them *is Dasein* (though none of them is all of *Dasein*). Within the anyone and all it institutes, the science of chemistry is a coherent subpattern: chemistry is *Dasein*—and so are philately, Christmas, and Cincinnati.

There is, however, one crucial omission from the foregoing list. According to the first sentence of the book proper (p. 41), we are ourselves *Dasein*. But this is the most misunderstood sentence in all of Heidegger. For readers have surmised that '*Dasein*' is just a newfangled term for 'person' (or 'ego' or 'mind')—in other words, that each of us is or has one *Dasein*, and there is a *Dasein* for each of us. This is wrong; and the first indication is a simple textual point. 'Person' is a count noun (we can "count" a person, several people, and so on); *Dasein* is (virtually) never used as a count noun.[8] On the other hand, it isn't a mass noun either (such as 'water' or 'gold'); *Dasein* can no more be measured out (e.g., in gallons or ounces) than it can be counted. Grammatically, 'tuberculosis' is a closer analogy. We neither count "tuberculoses" nor

measure amounts of it; it comes, rather, in distinct occurrences or cases (which can, of course, be counted). A person is like an occurrence or "case" of *Dasein*–except that one doesn't catch it, let alone get over it. *Dasein* is not a species of which we are specimens, a type of which we are tokens, a feature which we have, a spirit which is in us, a condition which we are in, or even a whole of which we are parts (though that's closest). People are to *Dasein* as baseball games are to baseball, as utterances are to language, as works are to literature. *Dasein* is the overall phenomenon, consisting entirely of its individual "occurrances," and yet prerequisite for any of them being what it is. English lacks a convincing word for this relation; so I will settle for saying that a person is a *case* of *Dasein*.[9]

People are, in one sense, on a par with everything else the anyone institutes; they are identifiable coherent subpatterns within the overall pattern that is *Dasein*. Intuitively, each person is that pattern of normal dispositions and social roles that constitutes an individual member of the conforming community. Now, it is a fundamental requirement of the story so far that *Dasein* have such "member-patterns" (conformists); but nothing has been said about what distinguishes these patterns either from one another, or from other subpatterns of *Dasein*—in effect, a "top-down" version of the personal identity problem. We can emphasize both this remarkable doctrine and the special difficulty it raises with a cryptic third slogan: *People are primordial institutions*. In other words, you and I are institutions, like General Motors, marriage, and the common law, except that we are "primordial." What could that mean?

Try to imagine a conforming community whose members are (physically) like beehives; that is, each bee is just an organ or appendage of some conformist hive, and many such hives make up the group. These hives imitate and censure one another, thus sustaining norms of hive behavior. But what is hive behavior? If a particular bee visits a forbidden flower, how is that the hive's doing, and not the bee's? Well suppose, as a matter of physiological fact, that stinging any one bee would tend to suppress whatever any bees in her hive were (recently and conspicuously) engaged in; so, to keep bees away from forbidden flowers, it suffices to sting the sisters of any one that wanders. In effect, the hive as a whole is held to account for the activity of its parts; and it (the hive) is made to change its ways. Compare this with spanking a child's bottom when it (the child) steals with its fingers, or blasphemes with its mouth. The whole hive, like the whole child, is one "unit of accountability," and therefore the "subject" of the behavior, because it is what takes the heat, and learns from "its" mistakes. By the same token, it can be one member of a conforming community.





Units of accountability are as structured and multifarious as the norms to which they are held. Trivially, for instance, institutions of enduring ownership and debt require enduring owners and debtors. More important, many norms require "sorting" community members in the standard sorting of behavioral circumstances; thus, if you're a sargeant and you encounter a captain, then salute. In other words, what a unit of accountability is accountable for is a function of its official rank—or, more generally, its various social and institutional roles. There is an obvious analogy between these social roles, and the roles which define equipment; but paraphernalia are never held to account (censured), no matter how badly they perform. Social roles ("offices") are roles whose players are accountable for how they play them.

Each unit of accountability, as a pattern of normal dispositions and social roles, is a subpattern of *Dasein*—an institution. But it is a distinctive institution, in that it can have behavior as "my" behavior, and can be censured if that behavior is improper; it is a case of *Dasein*. Moreover, institutions of this kind are essential to all others; for without accountability there would be no censorship, hence no norms, no anyone, no *Daesin* at all. Thus, accountable cases are "primordial" institutions. Heidegger places this structure, which he calls "in-each-case-mineness" (*Jemeinigkeit*; p. 42), among *Dasein's* most fundamental characteristics.

There is more, however, to primordial cases of *Dasein* than conformist accountability. To see what it is, we must unpack a fourth slogan—this time, one which Heidegger himself states and emphasizes:

> *The "essence" of Dasein lies in its being extant.*[10]

"Being extant," of course, is one of the basic technical notions of *Being and Time*; it is not at all the same as "being real"—indeed, these are contrasted. Reality is the mode of being of the traditional *res*, the independent "thing" or substance. *Dasein*, it should be clear by now, is not a thing in any traditional sense; it is not real, but extant. By the same token, electrons and galaxies are not extant (but real). The contrast is not invidious in either direction—there genuinely *are* both extant and real beings (entities). Nor, strictly speaking, is it exhaustive: mutually defining (interdependent) paraphernalia are neither real (independent things) nor extant (*Dasein*), but "available"; and there are other modes as well.[11]

Roughly, to be extant is to be instituted; but Heidegger doesn't put it that way. The closest he comes to a definition is more like: something is extant if what (or "who") it is, in each case, is its own efforts to

understand what (or who) it is (see, e.g., pp. 53, 231, and 325). Now there may be some plausibility to saying that who we are is, in part, a function of our self-understanding: I'm a pacifist or a baseball fan if I think I am. But nothing I could think would make me emperor, let alone Napoleon; and much more than my self-image seems involved in my being a philosophy teacher, an electronics hobbyist, a middle-aged man, and so on.

The problem concerns the notion of "understanding"; Heidegger says:

> We sometimes use . . . the expression "understanding something" to mean "being able to manage an undertaking," "being up to it," [or] "knowing how to do something." (p. 143

Understanding something is equated with competence or know-how. So, the person who "really understands" race cars is the one who can make them go fast, whether by fine tuning or fine driving (two ways to understand them); understanding formal mathematics amounts to mastery of the formalisms, ability to find proofs, and such like. But what, in this sense, could be meant by "*self*-understanding" ? What would be the relevant "know-how"?

Well, it would be each individual's ability to be him or herself, to manage his or her own life—in other words, knowing how (in each case) to be "me". And what know-how is that? According to Heidegger, any and all know-how that I may have is *ipso facto* some portion of my knowing how to be me. If I understood race cars in the way that mechanics do, then I would know how to be a race-car mechanic—which, in part, is what I would be. Even theoretical understanding, e.g., of electrons, is a sophisticated and specialized aspect of knowing how to be a person of a certain sort: a quantum mechanic, say.

So far, however, this is only "dispersed" self-understanding, in terms of separate worldly roles; it lacks any character of understanding oneself as a complete individual—as a *self*. Imagine a chess-playing device which can come up with a strong move for any given position, but which lacks any overall sense of trying to win. The collected moves of such a device do not really add up to a complete game, but are only a series of unconnected exercises; it doesn't really play chess. Analogously, a collection of dispersed roles does not really add up to a whole person, a complete "life". What is left out is *trying* to understand oneself (as such).

Two preliminary observations are in order before proceeding. First, every normal conformist is at the same time a unit of accountability and a censorious guardian of the tradition. Each normal disposition to do *A* in circumstances *C* is, by the very nature of conformism, paired





with another disposition to censure any failures to do *A* in *C*. But these dispositions are distinct, meaning that it is possible to censure one's own failures. Thus, a conformist unit of accountability is also a potential unit of self-accountability. Second, in my pains to avoid any hidden presupposition of mentality or reason, I have spoken exclusively of dispositions, behavior, and know-how—making everything sound "mindless" and inarticulate. But of course it isn't. Among *Dasein's* many institutions are those of language and explicit consideration. These can be particularly relevant to a serious effort at self-understanding: what I say about myself, for example, and why. Moreover, they enable a case of *Dasein* to judge its own dispositions without actually acting them out. It doesn't have to wait and see what it would do in a certain situation; it can "ask itself". And if it then disapproves, it doesn't have to spank its own bottom; it can "change its mind".

Invariably, a case of *Dasein* plays many roles. What is proper for it on any occasion will be a function of what roles these are; some priests, for instance, aren't supposed to have love affairs, though other bachelors may. Also invariably, the demands of these roles will often conflict. What is appropriate for me, the breadwinner, may not be compatible with what is appropriate for me, the aspiring artist, not to mention me, the shop foreman, me, the political activist, and me, the would-be adventurer, dreaming of the orient. This gives self-understanding, the ability to be me, a more challenging aspect.

All these competing proprieties must somehow be juggled; and there are basically two ways to do that. One, of course, is just to "slide," to take at each moment the path of least resistance. That means attending to whatever proprieties happen, at that moment, to be the most conspicuous or pressing, forgetting about whatever others are temporarily out of sight. This is to remain dispersed in the worldly. The opposite possibility is to confront the conflicts, and resolve them: that is, to make up one's mind.[12] Trying to understand oneself is seeking out and positively adjudicating the conflicting requirements of one's various roles, in the exercise of a higher-level dispostion which we might call "self-criticism" (I think it's close to what Heidegger means by "conscience").

A case of *Dasein* is genuinely self-critical when, in response to discovered tensions among its roles, it does something about them. Thus, I might quit the priesthood and embrace my lover, or decide to subordinate everything to my art. The important point is that I don't just let some dispositions override others (which may be weaker at the moment); rather, in the light of some, I resolutely alter or eliminate others. As a unit of self-accountability, I find and root out an inconsistency in my overall self-understanding; instead of vacillating unwittingly between one "me" and another, I become one of them (or

perhaps a third) constantly and explicitly, and thereby achieve a "truer" self-understanding.

All self-critical adjudication is among current roles. In terms of the whole, some may be rejected, others adjusted; but there is no external or higher standard against which all are judged. The only end is self-constancy—a clearer, more coherent self-understanding ability to be me. When a role survives such critical scrutiny (perhaps adjusted), Heidegger says it is "taken over as one's own" (*zugeeignet*; M&R: appropriated). It is no longer my role just because I happen to play it, but mine because I claim it, by my own choice. Insofar as self-understanding critically takes over its roles, it is said to be *self-owned* (*eigentlich*; M&R: authentic). Inconstant (dispersed and wavering) self-understanding is, in the same terms, *disowned* (but, of course, it's still *je meines*: in each case mine). A disowned case of *Dasein* does not lack a self or "personality," even a subtle and distinctive one; it's just un-self-critical. "Who" it is is still determined by its self-understanding, but this understanding remains unexamined and dispersed in the world.

The opposite of dispersal, self-owned-ness, is, roughly, "getting your act together." As the resolution of conflicts that lead to wavering inconsistency, it is also *resoluteness*. Everything that is owned, everything that is gotten together or resolved upon, is adopted in the first place from the anyone; except for small variations, there is no other source for ways of understanding oneself. To be self-owned ("authentic") is not to rise above the anyone, not to wash away the taint of common sense and vulgar custom, but rather to embrace (some part of) what these have to offer in a particular selective way. The result is a critically realized, maximally self-constant ability to lead an individual, cohesive, limited life: *mine*! This is what's at stake in trying to understand oneself.

It is also the rest of what is meant by saying that people are "primordial" institutions. Nobody is every wholly disowned or wholly self-owned; mostly, we're in between. Moreover, that's essential. The very possibility of multiple roles, and thus of community and *Dasein* in any nontrivial sense, depends on a fair measure of routine self-constancy in the member "cases". That people try to understand themselves, and hence are always self-owned in some manner and degree, is as much a prerequisite on the possibility of *Dasein* as that they are primitive loci of accountability (*je meines*). Heeding the call to this self-critical effort (conscience), and not mere conformist accountability, is fully-human responsibility. Thus Heidegger can say that to be extant is to be that being the cases of which try to understand themselves: in being what they are, who they are is an issue to them.

Portions of these last few paragraphs may sound disconcertingly "existentialist," as, indeed, do large tracts of *Being and Time*. But, though the comparison is not empty, it is more often misleading than





helpful. The central question is not how to be a "knight of faith" or a "superman," let alone a "futile passion," but rather what it is to be a person at all. I have tried to sketch an account of how our distinctively human use of tools and language, sense of custom and propriety, and capacity for self-criticism might all be grounded in our distinctive communality. According to the analysis, a person is not fundamentally a talking animal or a thinking thing, but a case of *Dasein*: a crucial sort of subpattern in an overall pattern instituted by conformism, and handed down from generation to generation. If the same account turns out also to lend an insight into the special existentialist concerns of personal integration and self-ownership . . . well then, so much the better.[13]

## NOTES

[1]Heidegger (1927); all page citations are to this text, unless otherwise indicated; translations are my own. For reference, the German pagination is reproduced in the margins of the Macquarrie and Robinson (1962) translation; when necessary, this translation will be cited by the initials "M&R".

[2]Conformism is deeply related to the crucial notion of "falling"; compare also the discussion of "*Sorge um . . . Abstand*" (p. 126).

[3]*Das Man* (M&R: the "they"); see, e.g., pp. 126f, 194, and 288.

[4]*Verweisung* (M&R: reference or assignment); the sense of the German is roughly "being sent or directed, by or away from one thing, toward another," for which English lacks a comfortable equivalent. But nuances in the original are at best a guide; *a priori*, it's just as likely that no German word is exactly right as that no English word is. Philosophical sense is ultimately determined not by dictionaries or etymologies, but by examples and the doctrines themselves.

[5]Dewey makes a similar point: "A tool is a particular thing, but it is more than a particular thing, since it is a thing in which a connection, a sequential bond of nature is embodied. It possesses an objective relation as its own defining property. . . . its primary relationship is to other external things, as the hammer to the nail, and the plow to the soil." (1925, p. 103)

[6]Compare *Welt*, sense 3, p. 65, and *Umwelt*, p. 66.

[7]Compare this with Dewey's remark about "mind" (which he clearly distinguishes from personal consciousness): ". . . the whole history of science, art, and morals proves that the mind that appears *in* individuals is not as such individual mind. The former is in itself a system of belief, recognitions, and ignorances, of acceptances and rejections, of expectancies and appraisals of meanings which have been instituted under the influence of custom and tradition." (1925, p. 180; compare p. 184)

[8]The Macquarrie and Robinson translation, however, is poor in this regard; thus, they render the opening sentence (just mentioned) as: "We are ourselves the entities to be analysed [i.e., Dasein]." The plural 'entities' would suggest a count noun, but the German is singular; such errors are common. (But on rare occasions, Heidegger himself seems to slip up; see e.g., pp. 240 and 336.)

[9]German doesn't have a terrific term for it either; when Heidegger wants to speak of individuals, he qualifies with '*je*' or '*jeweilig*', meaning, roughly, "in each case," or "in the given case."

[10]p. 42 (italics and scarequotes in original); compare pp. 117, 212, 231, 318, etc.

[11]I have been taking some liberties. 'Being extant' translates '*Existenz*' (German lacks the cognate pair we have in English); 'being real' translates '*Vorhandensein*' (M&R: presence-at-hand), which is not strictly correct, but pedagogically defensible in the context of *Being and Time*; 'being available' translates '*Zuhandensein*' (M&R: readiness-to-hand). For relevant texts, see pp. 42, 69, 92, 211f, and 313f.

[12]Readers familiar with *Being and Time* will notice that "forgetting," "remaining dispersed in the worldly," and "resolution" (and also several other expressions in the following paragraphs) are theoretical notions, discussed at length by Heidegger.

[13]This paper would not have been possible were it not for years of close and fruitful collaboration with Bert Dreyfus. I am also grateful for comments and questions from Bob Brandom, Jerry Massey, Nick Rescher, and the audiences at Ohio State University, Yale University, and the Council for Philosophical Studies Summer Institute on Phenomenology and Existentialism, where earlier versions were read and discussed.

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# Heidegger and Dasein's 'Bodily Nature':

## What is the Hidden Problematic?

*David R. Cerbone*

**Abstract**

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explicitly defers any consideration of ourselves (Dasein) as *embodied*. I try to account for Heidegger's reluctance to talk about 'the body' in connection with his explication of Dasein, by arguing that doing so would be at odds with the kind of investigation his 'phenomenology of everydayness' is meant to be. That Heidegger omits discussion of the body in *Being and Time* might lead one to think of the human body in terms of the other categories Heidegger deploys: readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand (*Being and Time*) and biological organisms (*Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*). I argue that any such identification ought to be resisted, as these categories serve only to deprive our bodies of their specifically human dimension. Indeed, by surveying the failure of these categories as proper to the human body, we gain further insight into Heidegger's initial deferral: only given the existential analytic can one begin to offer a proper account of ourselves in bodily terms.

**Keywords:** Heidegger; body; embodiment; interpretation; organism

The body phenomenon is the most difficult problem.[1]

In the course of his discussion of spatiality in the third chapter of Division I of *Being and Time*, Heidegger remarks that Dasein's '"bodily nature" hides a whole problematic of its own' (*BT*, 143).[2] He concludes the sentence by noting that 'we shall not treat it here'.[3] This deliberate omission on Heidegger's part is especially frustrating given the character of the 'existential analytic' of Dasein, to which Division I is devoted. That is, in this analytic, Heidegger is principally concerned to undermine the predominant Cartesian conception of human beings, namely that human beings are

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essentially *minds* or *egos*, which are autonomous and self-contained, and whose primary relation to the world is best understood in epistemic terms (perceiving, believing, knowing, etc.).[4] In contrast to this traditional conception, Heidegger offers an account of what it is to be human in terms of what he calls 'Dasein'. He argues that a proper understanding of Dasein reveals its way of being to be being-in-the-world, where this means in the first instance being involved within a practical context which is structured according to impersonally articulated norms. On this counter-conception of what it is to be human, our primary relation to the world is one of practical engagement, rather than detached, theoretical contemplation or beholding. In other words, what a phenomenology of everydayness reveals is agents whose most fundamental activity is the skilful manipulation of equipment in the service of a variety of tasks. Only on the basis of this primary activity, Heidegger argues, can the epistemic activities at the heart of the Cartesian enterprise be made intelligible.[5]

Given the prominence, and indeed the priority, of practical engagement with the world within Heidegger's conception of what it is to be human, an understanding of ourselves as *embodied* agents would seem to be a central concern, and not something whose treatment could be casually deferred. On a Cartesian conception of human beings, embodiment is, to be sure, a problem (indeed, a potentially intractable problem given the difficulties which attend dualism), but it can be seen as having a secondary or derivative status relative to the central project of adequately characterizing the 'inner' workings of a cognizing subject. For Heidegger, however, the body would seem to be immediately implicated in his phenomenology of everyday activity, in what he calls 'circumspective, non-thematic absorption'. For this activity involves the manipulation of concrete items such as hammers, pens, doorknobs, and the like, and those manipulations are effected by means of the body. As Heidegger tells us, Dasein's dealings are with 'things which are ready-to-hand and used for the body', and many of his central examples involve a 'craftsman's tools [such as a hammer] which are held in the hand and moved with it' (*BT*, 143). So, whereas Descartes in the course of his *Meditations* can declare himself to be identified solely with his mind and can doubt that he even has a body, on Heidegger's account of Dasein, one would expect the body to occupy a more central role. Thus, Heidegger's unwillingness to engage in the task of addressing the 'whole problematic' hidden in Dasein's 'bodily nature' appears to be more than just a casual oversight: either it constitutes a serious error on Heidegger's part or he has good reasons for deferring consideration of the body.

Many commentators appear to lean toward the former possibility. For example, Didier Franck writes: 'Now it is essential – although this necessity was something that Heidegger never took into account – that *Dasein* have hands so that, all metaphors aside, the being of the being





that it is could be named being-at-hand'.[6] Here, Heidegger is criticized for neglecting our embodiment in his analytic of Dasein. Indeed, Franck concludes his paper with the verdict that 'the disappearance of the body is *the phenomenological price* of the appearance of Being',[7] which suggests that the body is condemned to being understood only in terms of *privation*, and so never as intertwined with Dasein's way of being. A further example is David Krell, who, in his *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy*, suggests that Heidegger's neglect of the body (and of the category of *life* more generally) reveals deficiencies in his philosophy. At one point, Krell asks:

> Did Heidegger simply fail to see the arm of the everyday body rising in order to hammer shingles onto the roof, did he overlook the quotidian gaze directed toward the ticking watch that overtakes both sun and moon, did he miss the body poised daily in its brazen car, a car equipped with turn signals fabricated by and for the hand and eye of man, did he neglect the human being capable day-in, day-out of moving its body and setting itself in motion? If so, what conclusion must we draw?[8]

Krell's answer to the final question is that 'Dasein seems destined to share the fate of the cherubim and seraphim.'[9] Despite the heat of Krell's rhetoric, it's unclear to me precisely what the argument is to show that Heidegger is *mistaken* in omitting the body from his existential analytic of Dasein; perhaps it is due to his realization of how misleading it is to talk of *the* body, as it immediately invites a contrast with *the* mind. Consider, for example, the following passage, in which it is clear that Heidegger has not simply *forgotten* our embodiment:

> Whether [Dasein] 'is composed of' the physical, psychic, and spiritual and how these realities are to be determined is here left completely unquestioned. We place ourselves in principle outside of this experiential and interrogative horizon outlined by the definition of the most customary name for this entity, man: *homo animal rationale*. What is to be determined is not an outward appearance of this entity but from the outset and throughout solely *its way to be*, not the what of that of which it is composed but *the how of its being and the characters of this how*.
>
> (*HCT*, 154)

Finally, though not exactly critical of Heidegger, Hubert Dreyfus, in his commentary, displays a certain degree of discomfort in his handling of the issue of embodiment. Dreyfus twice cites Heidegger's remark concerning the problematic hidden in Dasein's bodily nature, and concludes that,

for Heidegger, 'having a body does not belong to Dasein's essential structure', that 'Dasein is not necessarily embodied', and that 'the body is not essential'.[10] These remarks come precariously close to the Cartesian position ('the real distinction between mind and body') Heidegger (and Dreyfus) is otherwise so careful to avoid. The question that needs to be addressed is whether Heidegger's deferral of a discussion of the body can be understood in such a way that one is not left trying to explain (or explain away) the possibility of disembodied Dasein. That is, can Heidegger at one and the same time maintain that having a body (being embodied) is not a feature of Dasein's essential structure *and* that Dasein is never without a body?

In this paper I want to resist these negative assessments, and instead ask what it is about the project of *Being and Time* that dictates a deferral or postponement of talk about the body.[11] As I show below, explicit consideration of the body, or of Dasein's 'bodily nature', may be seen to be at odds with the kind of investigation Heidegger takes himself to be engaged in, namely a transcendental investigation of those features which are distinctive of Dasein's (our) way of being. Given Heidegger's apparent refusal to include embodiment as one of the constitutive features of Dasein's way of being, it is tempting to look for a place for the body in one of the other categories of worldly entities Heidegger deploys: *Being and Time* provides two such candidates, namely the ready-to-hand (or equipment) and the present-at-hand (or mere things). Moreover, it will prove to be useful to examine a subsequent lecture course, his 1929/30 *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*: in these later lectures, Heidegger devotes considerable attention to the 'essence' of organs and organisms, thereby providing us with a third candidate. I will argue, however, that none of these three candidates proves to be a satisfactory category for the human body.[12] Nevertheless, by working through the various categories of entities which *don't* have Dasein's way of being, and by seeing the difficulties and deficiencies involved in trying to locate the body within them, we will come to a better understanding of Heidegger's initial deferral of an investigation into Dasein's 'bodily nature' *and* we will begin to see how that investigation ought to proceed. We will, in other words, begin to see where the problematic is hidden and what it consists in.

## I

In the first Introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes:

> Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very being, that being is an *issue* for it.
>
> (*BT*, 32)





This passage makes clear that for Heidegger, Dasein is an entity, albeit a distinctive one. Thus, it is tempting to think of Dasein as a bodily entity, and there is certainly nothing wrong with succumbing to this temptation in the sense that Heidegger gives us no reason to believe in the possibility of disembodied Dasein (as Descartes does with the mind). However, the real question would seem to be whether embodiment is part of the *essence* of Dasein, whether being embodied, and even being embodied in a particular way, is part of what it is to *be* Dasein. Put this way, Heidegger would, I think, be more reluctant to go along, as can be seen in the following passage:

> *The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence.* Accordingly those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not 'properties' present-at-hand of some entity which 'looks' so and so and is itself present-at-hand; they are in each case possible ways for it to be, *and no more than that.* All the being-as-it-is which this entity possesses is primarily being. So when we designate this entity with the term 'Dasein', we are expressing not its 'what' (as if it were a table, house, or tree) but its being.
>
> (*BT*, 67; second italics mine)

Thus, while Dasein is indeed an entity, one which can be encountered within the world, Heidegger is emphatic in restricting the term 'Dasein' to designating only that entity's way of being, and 'no more than that'. Such a restriction in the scope of the term 'Dasein' entails a restriction in the characteristics which can be properly ascribed to it:

> All *explicata* to which the analytic of Dasein gives rise are obtained by considering Dasein's existence-structure. Because Dasein's characters of being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them '*existentialia*'. These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call '*categories*' – characteristics of being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein.
>
> (*BT*, 70)

This division of characteristics into 'existentialia' and 'categories' appears exhaustive: Dasein *qua* Dasein should only be described in terms of existentialia, and nowhere does Heidegger suggest that embodiment is one of them.[13] If this is so, then it would appear that only 'categories' remain, and so that the body is an entity 'whose character is not that of Dasein'. We will return to this implication shortly.

Heidegger's reluctance to include bodily characteristics in his explication of Dasein (because such characteristics are 'categorial') can be seen by probing further into his basic conception of Dasein, namely as

being-in-the-world: Heidegger is careful to point out that the 'in' contained in this definition is not to be understood as denoting spatial containment; Dasein is not in the world in the same way as a quantity of water is in a glass. Instead, the 'in' is meant to signify involvement or engagement with or in the world. The sense of 'in' being appealed to here is akin to the sense in which one is *in* the army or *in* business: although being involved in such things may by and large commit one to being spatially contained in things like barracks and mess halls in the first example, or offices and conference rooms in the second, the 'in' in question cannot be *reduced* to these spatial senses. (One isn't in the army simply by being inside a mess hall, nor does one cease to be in the army just by staying away from all buildings and structures associated with it.) Attention to Dasein as a physically embodied agent might blur these kinds of distinctions, which are central to Heidegger's project.

There are, I think, deeper reasons for Heidegger's refusal to incorporate an account of the body into his explication of Dasein. These reasons have to do with the kinds of conclusions he wishes to draw concerning Dasein's way of being. That is, Heidegger's aim is to conduct a kind of *transcendental* investigation, the purpose of which is to reveal various non-contingent features of Dasein's way of being. For example, in the second Introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger outlines what he expects an investigation of 'Dasein's everydayness' to uncover:

> In this everydayness there are certain structures which we shall exhibit – not just accidental features, but essential ones which, in every kind of being that factical Dasein may possess, persist as determinative for the character of its being. Thus by having regard for the basic state of Dasein's everydayness, we shall bring out the being of this entity in a preparatory fashion.
>
> (*BT*, 38)

Attending to Dasein's 'bodily nature' may be seen to be at odds with this conception of what a phenomenology of everydayness is meant to achieve: our embodiment, especially our being embodied in this particular way, may be considered too contingent to be part of the existential analytic. Heidegger may want to leave it an open question whether there could be beings who are embodied in radically different kinds of bodies, but who nonetheless possess or exhibit our way of being, and are thus, in a deep sense, the same kind of beings as us.[14]

Given the transcendental character of his project, Heidegger is careful to insist that his investigation not be identified with, or be taken to be competing with, various branches of the 'positive sciences'; instead, his analytic must be seen as coming before the investigations of human beings undertaken by the special sciences. Thus, Heidegger writes:





> [I]n the existential analytic of Dasein we also make headway with a task that is hardly less pressing than that of the question of being itself – the task of laying bare that *a priori* basis which must be visible before the question of 'what man is' can be discussed philosophically. The existential analytic of Dasein comes *before* any psychology or anthropology, and certainly before any biology. While these too are ways in which Dasein can be investigated, we can define the theme of our analytic with greater precision if we distinguish it from these.
>
> (*BT*, 71)

In the section immediately following this paragraph (§10), Heidegger continues to delineate the differences between his existential analytic of Dasein and the various investigations of human beings undertaken by anthropology, psychology and biology, and concludes that they 'all fail to give an unequivocal and ontologically adequate answer to the question about the *kind of being* which belongs to those entities which we ourselves are' (*BT*, 75).

This insistence on the priority of his investigation over those of the special sciences is further revealed in his 1928 lectures, published as *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, where he stresses the importance of first understanding Dasein in what he calls its 'neutrality'. Thinking of Dasein in bodily terms in the first instance, Heidegger insists, occludes a proper understanding of its meaning. In §10, which is devoted to explicating what Heidegger calls 'Dasein's transcendence', which is another name for its being-in-the-world, he points to this 'neutrality' of Dasein:

> The peculiar *neutrality* of the term 'Dasein' is essential, because the interpretation of this being must be carried out prior to every factual concretion. This neutrality also indicates that Dasein is neither of the two sexes. ... In its neutrality Dasein is not the indifferent nobody and everybody, but the primordial positivity and potency of the essence.
>
> (*MFL*, 136–7)[15]

As this passage indicates, Heidegger regards maintaining the neutrality of Dasein as essential to securing a proper interpretation of its way of being. This is not to say that there ever is such a thing as neutral Dasein, as Heidegger points out in the following passage:

> Neutral Dasein is never what exists; Dasein exists in each case only in its factical concretion. But neutral Dasein is indeed the primal source of intrinsic possibility that springs up in every existence and makes it intrinsically possible.
>
> (*MFL*, 137)

Within 'factical concretion' in the above two passages, Heidegger includes embodiment: 'as factical, Dasein is, among other things, dispersed in a body and concomitantly, among other things, disunited in a particular sexuality'.

The distinction Heidegger draws between Dasein's 'neutrality' and its 'factical concretion' displays just how slippery his position is with respect to the issue of embodiment. Consider again the remarks by Dreyfus noted above: (1) 'having a body does not belong to Dasein's essential structure'; (2) 'Dasein is not necessarily embodied'; and (3) 'the body is not essential'. Remarks (1) and (3) appear to accord with what Heidegger says both in *Being and Time* and in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (for the latter work, just replace 'essential' with 'neutral'). However, (2) is more problematic: is it simply equivalent to (1) and (3)? Does 'not necessarily embodied' mean 'possibly disembodied'? If so, how does one then understand Heidegger's claim that 'neutral Dasein is never what exists'? What is the modal force of 'never'? If 'never' means 'necessarily never', then (2) is false, but then if (2) is false, (1) and (3) become harder to understand, let alone justify.[16] These difficulties indicate that considerable care must be taken in properly locating Dasein's 'bodily nature', within Heidegger's overall project: in particular, the contrast between essential and accidental is likely to prove misleading.

Heidegger's talk of 'neutrality' and 'dispersal' is indeed likely to mislead, as such talk makes it tempting to think of the body as something *other* than Dasein, into which it, understood in its 'peculiar neutrality', is dispersed.[17] In other words, the exclusion of embodiment from an explication of neutral Dasein may lead one to think that the body is not so much *secondary* relative to the existential analytic as it is a member of another category altogether. In the next section, I want to explore this temptation, if only to show ultimately that it ought to be avoided.

## II

Since it is clear that Heidegger does not want in any way to identify Dasein with its body or even include talk of its 'bodily nature' in an explication of its 'peculiar neutrality', it would appear that the body belongs in one of those categories of entities which don't have Dasein's way of being. Heidegger offers two candidates in *Being and Time*, while in a subsequent lecture course from 1929/30, a third comes into view. As we shall see, however, none of these categories provides adequate resources for characterizing the body as a specifically *human* body; the failure of these three categories underscores, in turn, Heidegger's initial *reluctance* to discuss the body, rather than relegate it to another category.

Is the body an item of equipment, i.e. something ready-to-hand, or is it instead a mere thing, something present-at-hand? Heidegger insists that





Dasein is never to be regarded as a bearer of properties, as something encountered present-at-hand, but this insistence may not extend to the body.[18] After all, the body can be the proper subject of a scientific inquiry, indeed many different such inquiries, all the way down to chemistry and physics and all the way up to anatomy and physiology. When the body is treated in such a manner, its present-at-hand aspects are revealed and systematized. Thus, there is a sense in which the body, as one more kind of corporeal object, can be regarded as something present-at-hand, as a bearer of properties such as height and weight (and chemical composition . . .).

Several problems arise, however, in considering presence-at-hand as *the* category for the human body. To begin with, treating the body as a mere thing which Dasein in some way infuses or inhabits is apt to bring with it the suspicion that dualism has not so much been overcome, as simply redescribed. Given the anti-Cartesian aspirations that inform much of *Being and Time* and Heidegger's other early writings, this suspicion should be particularly unwelcome. But treating the body as a mere thing brings with it other, more pressing, difficulties in terms of how to characterize what a body *does*: the poverty of thinking of our bodies as just more spatio-temporal things among others can be seen by thinking of the difficulties involved in characterizing human actions and gestures in terms of the concepts associated with presence-at-hand. Raising my arm, for example, treated as a mere bodily movement, can be described in the languages of physics and biology, as the motion of something with such and such mass with various goings-on at the micro- and macro-physical level. Such descriptions do not, however, capture the *significance* of the movement: I may, for example, be raising my arm to ask a question at a colloquium, to wave to a friend, or to drive a nail into a piece of wood.

Understanding human actions and gestures in this latter way, as having a significance that cannot be captured in purely physical or biological terms, moves the body out of the realm of the present-at-hand, and into the domain of meaningful worldly activity. This brings us to our second candidate, readiness-to-hand, since the difference between understanding entities as mere things and as significant items within the everyday world can be seen in how one is to understand what it is for an entity to be an item of equipment. Consider one of Heidegger's favourite examples: a hammer. For Heidegger, what it is for something to be a hammer cannot be understood in terms of the properties (shape, weight, colour, molecular composition, etc.) of an object. To say what a hammer is, one must describe *hammering*; one must, that is, describe the ways in which a hammer is *used*. In doing so, one will inevitably mention other 'things' such as nails, saws, and lumber, and *purposes* such as holding two pieces of wood together, constructing a house or piece of furniture, and *roles* such as being a carpenter or craftsperson.

What a hammer is, first and foremost, is a piece of *equipment*, and in saying what any one piece of equipment is, one must refer to other pieces of equipment, as well as their respective uses in fulfilling various aims and purposes. That is why Heidegger says that 'taken strictly, there "is" no such thing as *an* equipment' (*BT*, 97). He continues:

> To the being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is. Equipment is essentially 'something-in-order-to . . .'. A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the 'in-order-to', such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability.
>
> (*BT*, 97)

Thus, any piece of equipment is not merely some discrete, spatio-temporal thing: what it is is captured only by describing its place within a holistic structure constituted by an array of tasks and purposes, along with other items of equipment. A hammer is something *with which* to hammer in nails *in order to* hold pieces of wood together *toward* the construction of something *for the sake of* Dasein's self-understanding as a carpenter.

But is, say, my arm, or my body as a whole for that matter, like items of equipment such as hammers and nails? Can the human body be located within this structure constituted by the with-which/in-order-to/toward-which/for-the-sake-of-which system of relations? Apart from the oddness of treating the hand and other parts of the body as themselves ready-to-hand, understanding the body as one more item of equipment may at first appear promising as an adequate account of its way of being. Three considerations immediately present themselves:

First, consider again the example of my raising my arm: this episode may be explicated in such a manner that my arm plays a role analogous to one played by a hammer in the workshop. We might be inclined to say something like this: my arm is something *with which* I wave to a friend *toward* the act of extending a greeting *in order to* in fact greet that friend *for the sake of* my being a friendly person. (Of course, the arm is an extremely versatile piece of equipment, since what it's equipment for is much more open-ended than, say, a hammer: I can use my arm to wave, ask a question, grab something, poke something, and so on and so on.) Second, the kind of holistic structure Heidegger regards as necessary for understanding the way of being of equipment might be suitably applied to parts of the body: in order for something to be a hand, it must be integrated properly within a larger structure; it must be connected to an arm, which is connected to a torso, etc. A hand that has been severed from the rest of the body is no longer a hand, strictly speaking, since it no longer has the proper functions associated with hands. Third, parts of the body have the same kind of 'transparency' as smoothly functioning items





of equipment. What I mean here can best be seen in the following passage, wherein Heidegger describes equipment's tendency to 'withdraw' insofar as it's being used:

> The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work – that which is to be produced at the time.
>
> (*BT*, 99)

In the same way, it might be argued that the parts of the body have this same tendency to withdraw insofar as when we are actively coping with our environment, we do not, for the most part, focus our attention on the parts of the body we are employing but instead we focus on the activity itself. If I had to think about all the various movements I must effect to type, say, or to walk from my apartment to campus, I would be unable to act in anything like the smooth and seamless manner I usually do.[9]

Despite the apparent substitutability of my arm for a hammer in the above example of waving to a friend, the holistic structure of parts of the body, and the 'transparency' or tendency to withdraw of both equipment and the body most lately noted, there still seems to be something odd about treating our bodies as just more items of equipment to be skilfully manipulated like so many hammers and fountain pens. As we shall see shortly, both the allure and the oddness of thinking about the body and its parts in terms of equipment provide, according to Heidegger, a point of entry for arriving at a proper understanding of biological organisms. Indeed, it is precisely by distinguishing organs and organisms from items of equipment that he, in his 1929/30 lectures, begins to articulate what he considers to be the 'essence' of the organism. To an examination of those lectures we now turn.

Part II of the *Fundamental Concepts* lectures is concerned primarily with the question, 'What is world?' In order to answer this question, however, Heidegger makes a lengthy detour through a number of theses, the consideration of which he regards as necessary to answering his fundamental question. Three of these subsidiary theses are the following: (1) Man is world-forming; (2) The animal is poor in world; and (3) The stone is worldless. By attending to the distinctions between and among stones, animals, and human beings, Heidegger hopes to clarify what is involved in answering his primary question.

Within his consideration of the second of the three subsidiary theses, namely that the animal is poor in world, Heidegger broaches the issue of just what it is for something to be an *organism*, and it is here that he

turns his attention to the distinction between bodily organs and items of equipment. How the placement of this discussion within his consideration of the essence of *animals* affects the extent to which we can apply the conclusions to *human* bodies will be considered later.

Heidegger begins by noting that 'both unicellular and multicellular living beings alike possess a *unity* of their own in each case, i.e. they have a specific *essential wholeness* by virtue of the fact that they are *organisms*' (*FCM*, 212). But, as Heidegger immediately goes on to ask, '*what precisely is an organism*?' (*FCM*, 212), and answering this question, it turns out, requires a consideration of various kinds of beings: 'purely material things, equipment, instrument, apparatus, device, machine, organ, organism, animality' (*FCM*, 213). Understanding what an organism is, then, requires a confrontation with this range of different kinds of beings in order to determine what marks or features distinguish organisms as organisms from that entire array.

Heidegger begins the task of differentiating organs from equipment by noting the difference in possibilities of use. He observes that whereas items of equipment are available for use by more than one person, the same is not true for bodily organs: 'Rather, every living being can only ever see with *its* eyes' (*FCM*, 219). Unlike equipment, which enjoys a kind of independence relative to various potential users, organs 'are incorporated into the being that makes use of them. Thus we can recognize an *initial distinction* by saying that an organ is an instrument which is incorporated into the user' (*FCM*, 219). Heidegger's point here is that the sense of *ownership* in the case of a body is hardly on a par with whatever sense of ownership there might be in the case of particular items of equipment: while I may be able to 'lend you a hand', my doing so is a very different kind of act than my lending you my hammer. Items of equipment are things which can be held in common, and can be used *in the same way* by *anyone*, whereas this is clearly not the case with my or anyone else's body.

To return to the example of my raising my arm, while it is certainly true that you can raise my arm for me, your doing so and my doing so on my own are two radically different kinds of act. I raise my arm *directly*, whereas someone else would first have to locate my arm and by means of her arm get mine to move: the movement is, we might say, only indirect in the latter case.[20] My arm is not something outside of myself, whose movement I effect by means of something else: I just move my arm. The idea of there being a direct connection between parts of the body and the organism is hinted at in Heidegger's talk of organs as *incorporated* into the entity: my arm, for example, is incorporated into my body, which is why I can move it in a different way than someone else can.[21] Heidegger continues, however, by noting that the idea of *incorporation* being appealed to here is question-begging, since what an organ is incorporated





into is an organism, but it is the essence of the organism which is being investigated.

Incorporation, then, serves to mark only an initial distinction between equipment and bodily organs; something more needs to be said in order to make the distinction clearer. Indeed, even with the appeal to incorporation, organs and items of equipment still have this much in common: both are *used* for something (the hammer for hammering, the eye for seeing); both are, Heidegger notes, characterized by being what he calls 'serviceable'. But what is it, then, which distinguishes equipment from bodily organs if both 'find their essence in serviceability'? It has been seen that the way in which these two kinds of entities are serviceable is different in that items of equipment are available for use by more than one creature, whereas bodily organs, by being incorporated into an organism, are available for use only by that one being. But this only seems to demarcate bodily organs as a special class of equipment, rather than an altogether different kind of things.

A further distinction is called for, which takes into account both the idea of incorporation and what I have called the 'directness' of the connection between the organism and its various organs. These ideas are captured in Heidegger's distinction between an item of equipment's *readiness* and a bodily organ's *capacity*:

> Readiness in this specific and well-defined sense belongs to equipment. As equipment the pen is ready for writing, but it has no capacity for writing. As a pen it is not *capable* of writing. It is a matter of distinguishing *readiness*, as a *particular kind of potentiality* which we ascribe to equipment, from *capacity*.
>
> (*FCM*, 220)

Equipment is always ready for something, and an organ has a capacity for something, but equipment is ready for use regardless of whether it's actively being taken hold of or gathering dust in the back of the workshop; organs, by contrast, have the capacities they have, to see, to grip, to pump blood, and so forth, only insofar as they are integrated into a living organism, and there is no sense to be made of an organ 'prior' to its being integrated; this is why Heidegger insists that an organ 'is never first an instrument which *subsequently* also gets incorporated into something else'. Indeed, Heidegger goes so far as to say that the expression, 'An organ has a capacity' is itself misleading, and he suggests instead that the reverse is true: 'we cannot say that the organ has capacities, but must say that *the capacity has organs*' (*FCM*, 221). Unlike an item of equipment, which is serviceable for something, the organ, Heidegger maintains, is in the service *of* something, namely the capacity which is responsible for its production. This reversal of the possession-relation

between an organ and a capacity such that it's more appropriate to say that the capacity has an organ serves to underscore the priority of the organism over the individual parts. Recall a remark of Heidegger's I cited previously: he begins his discussion of organs and organisms by emphasizing the 'essential wholeness' of an organism. It is in terms of that essential wholeness that an organ is the kind of thing it is.

Furthermore, we are now in a position to characterize this 'essential wholeness' of an organism: the organism is its capacities, or an instantiation of a set of capacities. Moreover, the organism, taken as its capacities, has a kind of autonomy that makes it different from a machine. While machines certainly have capacities in *some* sense, they lack the kind of essential wholeness of organisms by standing in need of something or someone else to 'activate' or exercise those capacities, and, moreover, to maintain and repair them when malfunctions occur. Organisms, by contrast, are 'essentially whole' in that they possess and exercise their capacities independently; there is, in other words, no need for some further thing or agent to exercise an organism's capacities. An organism is capable, on its own, of such things as movement, eating, and digestion; its parts, its various organs, are in some sense the product of those capacities, or, perhaps, the material realization of them. (This is why, I take it, Heidegger insists on saying that a creature does not see because it has eyes, but rather has eyes because it can see.) Bodily organs are, then, the manifestation of an organism's capacities and serve to effect the organism's exercising of them. This again serves to mark a fundamental distinction between organs and items of equipment, between serviceability and what Heidegger calls 'subservience'. As Heidegger puts it, 'the organ stands in service of the capacity that develops it' (*FCM*, 226) and so is subservient to that capacity. This is in marked contrast to the serviceability of the pen, for example, which, once produced, is no longer tied to what produced it.

Heidegger's talk of subservience as opposed to serviceability is meant to reinforce the directness of the connection between an organism and its parts: the bodily organ is a part of the organism insofar as it is subservient to a capacity and *is* the realization of it. Items of equipment, by contrast, are not subservient to any particular capacity: they are ready to be used, but not by anyone in particular. A hammer may be taken up and used by someone or other, or again it may simply be cast aside. Who uses the hammer and when is irrelevant to its being the hammer that it is; indeed, whether it's used at all makes no difference, as it were, to the hammer. As Heidegger notes: 'The hammer is certainly ready for hammering, but the being of the hammer is *not an urge toward* hammering. By contrast something like the eye, for example, which belongs to a capacity and subserves the capacity of seeing, can do so only because the *capacity is itself intrinsically subservient* and as such can take something into service'





(*FCM*, 226). Bodily organs are an urge toward their particular activities by being caught up in a network of self-activating capacities.

## III

Heidegger's discussion of organs and organisms in his *Fundamental Concepts* lectures provides at the very least a sketch of the difference between an organism and its parts on the one hand, and machines and items of equipment on the other. Parts of an organism form an integrated whole and are subservient to the capacities of which it is composed; the organic body is an essential whole, in that it is autonomous and self-perpetuating. Heidegger's discussion, moreover, serves to fill in a gap in *Being and Time* in that he has little to say in that earlier work about biological organisms. However, the question I want to pose is whether his discussion fills in the gap with which we have been concerned: does it, in other words, help to clarify the 'whole problematic' hidden in Dasein's 'bodily nature', to which Heidegger, as we have seen, alludes without further commentary in *Being and Time*?

It might seem that various questions about the human body are answered by means of the array of concepts afforded us by the *Fundamental Concepts* lectures: human beings are, at least in part, biological organisms, and are thus (again, at least in part) bundles of capacities, for movement, ingestion and digestion, and so forth. Problems arise, however, insofar as we try to spell out those capacities, since what a human being, and so a human body, does, according to Heidegger, is fundamentally different from the behaviour of an animal. Recall that Heidegger situates his discussion of organs and organisms within an examination of the thesis that the animal is 'poor in world'. The animal's poverty is directly related to its existence as a collection of capacities, namely as an autonomous, essentially closed system of instinctual responses and biological drives. Heidegger describes the animal as 'captivated', and as 'encircled by a disinhibiting ring', and the animal's captivation is a product of its capacities; as captivated and encircled, the animal is not open to the world in the way in which human beings are.[22]

At one point in his discussion, Heidegger notes that 'it is indeed questionable whether what we call human seeing is the same as animal seeing. Seeing and seeing are not the same thing, although human beings and animals both possess eyes and even the anatomical structure of the eye is alike in both cases' (*FCM*, 219), and further on, he is even more emphatic in his differentiation of human beings from animals: '[W]e should not compare our own seeing with that of the animal without further ado, since the *seeing and the potentiality to see of the animal* is a *capacity*; whereas *our potentiality to see* ultimately has a *quite different character of possibility* and possesses a *quite different manner of being*' (*FCM*, 231).

Heidegger's point in these passages is that human seeing, and human perception in general, is conceptually articulated: human beings see things *as* the things they are, which is to say that human beings are capable of bringing the objects in their environment under concepts, and so of forming judgments about them, which is something entirely different from the animal's merely differential responses.[23] That is why, when Heidegger turns to the thesis that 'man is world-forming', he devotes considerable attention to the nature of assertion.

Heidegger's point about perception and specifically linguistic capacities extends to human activity in general, which he prefers to call *comportment* rather than behaviour:

> The *specific manner* in which man *is* we shall call *comportment* and the *specific manner* in which the animal *is* we shall call *behavior*. They are fundamentally different from one another. . . . The behavior of the animal is not a *doing and acting*, as in human comportment, but a *driven performing*. In saying this we mean to suggest that instinctual drivenness, as it were, characterizes all such animal performance.
>
> (*FCM*, 237)

Comportment, in contrast to the behaviour of the animal, consists of meaningful actions, and thus is more than instinctual responses to environmental cues; moreover, the significance of human action points to its lack of autonomy: Dasein, we are told in *Being and Time*, just is its capability to be, but how those capabilities are spelled out is in terms of socially-articulated norms and practices. In this way, a human being, understood as Dasein, does not have capabilities in the autonomous way in which a biological organism has capacities, and this lack of autonomy, I would suggest, extends to how the body itself is to be understood.[24] As we have already seen, Heidegger explicitly warns against approaching questions concerning our way of being from the standpoint of biology, and indeed, echoes of this sentiment can be found in his later 'Letter on Humanism', where he writes:

> The fact that physiology and physiological chemistry can scientifically explain man as an organism is no proof that in this 'organic' thing, that is, in the body scientifically explained, the essence of man exists.
>
> (*BW*, 205)

This last passage suggests a distinction to be drawn between the 'body scientifically explained', as, that is, one more biological organism, and the body understood as a locus of Dasein's way of being.[25]





The human body, anatomically speaking, has much in common with the bodies of animals: Heidegger certainly cannot deny that we have hearts, livers, kidneys, etc., but he does refer to such things in 'Letter on Humanism' as part of 'our appalling and scarcely conceivable bodily kinship with the beast' (*BW*, 206). Elsewhere in this essay, Heidegger remarks that 'the human body is something essentially other than an animal organism' (*BW*, 204). The difficulties posed by Dasein's bodily nature lie in how to mediate between these two ideas, how, in other words, to sort out what features of our embodiment mark our kinship with the beast, as opposed to what in or about our bodies is 'essentially other' than animal. To do so involves, I would suggest, a determination of what there is about the body that is open to *interpretation*, rather than explanation.[26] Interpreting the body means placing bodily performances within a broader structure and so requires that the body *not* be treated as a closed system of capacities; rather, the body must be understood as a system of *capabilities*, as a locus of comportment as opposed to (mere) behaviour. But this broader structure into which the body must be placed in order to be properly characterized as a *human* body is nothing other than the *world* in Heidegger's 'ontological-existential' sense, namely that world which is partly constitutive of Dasein's way of being. Thus, in order to sort out the body into its animal-like aspects and its capabilities, to sort out which features of the body are open to explanation and which to interpretation, the structure of the world must first be made clear, which is just what Division I of *Being and Time* sets out to do. In this way, we see again why Heidegger insists on developing his existential analytic of Dasein, and so his account of the world, *first*: until that's completed, the whole problematic of Dasein's bodily nature must remain hidden.[27]

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## Notes

1 Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, trans. C. Siebert (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 146.

2 I make use of the following abbreviations to cite works by Heidegger: *BT* = *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); *BW* = *Basic Writings*, ed. D. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977); *FCM* = *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); *HCT* = *The History of the Concept of Time*, trans. T. Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); *MFL* = *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. M. Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

3 As translated by Macquarrie and Robinson, the full passage from which this sentence is taken reads as follows:

> Out of this directionality arise the fixed directions of right and left. Dasein constantly takes these directions along with it, just as it does its

> de-severances. Dasein's spatialization in its 'bodily nature' is likewise marked out in accordance with these directions. (This 'bodily nature' hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here.) Thus things which are ready-to-hand and used for the body – like gloves, for example, which are to move with the hands – must be given directionality towards right and left. A craftsman's tools, however, which are held in the hand and moved with it, do not share the hand's specifically 'manual' movements. So although hammers are handled just as much with the hand as gloves are, there are no right- or left-handed hammers. (*BT*, 143)

The parentheses, and likewise the repetition of 'bodily nature', are an artifact of the translation; the original German for the central sentence is: 'Die Verräumlichung des Daseins in seiner "Leiblichkeit", die eine eigene hier nicht zu behandelnde Problematik in sich birgt, ist mit nach diesen Richtungen ausgezeichnet.' Note the use of scare quotes around the phrase 'bodily nature' ('Leiblichkeit'), which suggests a certain uneasiness on Heidegger's part in talking of Dasein as having a bodily nature and thus that he regards it as only a kind of loose talk.

4 Descartes is discussed at length in Chapter 3 of Division I. However, two points should be noted concerning Heidegger's engagement with Cartesianism: first, the most immediate target for Heidegger's attack is the phenomenology of Husserl, whose method of 'bracketing' or 'phenomenological reduction' performs a function similar to, and clearly influenced by, Descartes's Method of Doubt; second, Heidegger's interest in Division I is not restricted to undermining Cartesianism; rather he wishes to examine the credentials of an entire way of thinking, roughly the subject–object distinction, of which Cartesianism is a sophisticated product.

5 That is, Heidegger wants to claim that knowing is what he calls a 'founded mode' of Dasein's being-in-the-world, where 'founded' means that another mode serves as a condition for its possibility. See *Being and Time*, Division 1, Chapter 2, §13.

6 See Didier Franck, 'Being and the Living', in E. Cadava, P. Connor, and J. Nancy (eds) *Who Comes After the Subject?* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 144.

7 Ibid., 146.

8 David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 52.

9 Ibid., 52.

10 Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 41 and 137.

11 In his *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being*, trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), Michel Haar asks: 'Can one phenomenologically and ontologically justify placing the body in a secondary position in the existential analytic?' (p. 34). In this paper, my aim is to show why Heidegger thinks that the answer to this question is 'yes'. Haar maintains, I think correctly, that Heidegger does not acknowledge the body as an 'existential', and justifies this by holding that 'transcendence (in other words, understanding) like the other existentials such as attunement and "thrownness" – both permeated with transcendence – are structures more *original than the body*' (p. 35). The question that remains, and which I will try at least to sketch an answer to here, is what the 'secondary position' occupied by the body looks like: is it a category wholly different from Dasein,





such as readiness-to-hand? Or does one need to work *through* Dasein's existential features in order to characterize the body *as Dasein's*?

12 To put it more carefully, none of these categories proves to be satisfactory for the human body understood *as* a distinctively *human* body.

13 In a recent paper, William Blattner has argued that we must 'accept that Heidegger is operating with a subterranean form of dualism', between 'natural and self-interpreting characteristics'. He argues that this dualism is integral to one of Heidegger's principal claims in *Being and Time*, namely that Dasein is its ability-to-be. On Heidegger's behalf, Blattner offers what he calls 'the Duality Thesis', namely that 'Dasein can be considered both in its proper ontological make-up, as essentially self-understanding, and in an abstracted, factual way, as something that merely occurs (esp., naturally).' On this reading, embodiment and bodily characteristics would be part of the 'abstracted, factual way' of considering Dasein, as opposed to its 'proper ontological make-up'. See his 'Existence and Self-Understanding in *Being and Time*', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 56(1) (March, 1996), pp. 97–110.

14 It's worth noting that Merleau-Ponty, a post-Heideggerian phenomenologist who *does* give the body a central place in investigations, holds that even what I'm calling the particularities of our bodily existence cannot be regarded as merely contingent features of our existence. In *Phenomenology of Perception* (trans. C. Smith (New York: Routledge, 1962)), he writes that 'if we conceive man in terms of his experience, that is to say, of his distinctive way of patterning the world, and if we reintegrate the "organs" into the functional totality in which they play their part, a handless or sexless man is as inconceivable as one without the power of thought'. Further on in the same paragraph, he writes:

> Everything in man is a necessity. For example, it is no mere coincidence that the rational being is also the one who holds himself upright or has a thumb which can be brought opposite to the fingers. On the other hand everything in man is a contingency in the sense that this human manner of existence is not guaranteed to every human child through some essence acquired at birth, and in the sense that it must be constantly reforged in him through the hazards encountered by the objective body. (p. 170)

Even without going so far as Merleau-Ponty does here, his remarks help to render problematic the appeal to the 'transcendental' character of Heidegger's investigation as a reason for ignoring questions concerning the body. That is, even if it is not conceded that *every* feature of our embodiment is necessary to our way of being, it still may be true that *being embodied* (even if not in the particular way that human beings are) is a non-contingent feature, and so is a structure that is, as Heidegger puts it, 'determinative for the character of' Dasein's way of being.

15 This 'peculiar neutrality' has been explored by Jacques Derrida, in 'Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference' (in P. Kamuf (ed.) *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 380–402). Derrida is principally concerned to understand the motivations for Heidegger's insistence that 'Dasein is neither of the two sexes', and the consequences that insistence has for our understanding of gender and sexuality. I should note here that Derrida's conclusions regarding Heidegger's

placement of sexuality in a secondary position apply to the category of the body more generally. Thus, when Derrida writes: 'There is no properly sexual predicate; at least there is none that does not refer, for its sense, to the *general* structures of Dasein' (p. 400), the assertion can be extended to the body more generally. What Derrida in this essay calls Heidegger's 'order of implications' means that sexual (and, I would contend, bodily) predicates rely for their sense on the 'general structures of Dasein', but not the other way around. That is, one can spell out what it is to be Dasein without reference to sexuality (the body), but one cannot spell out human sexuality (what a *human* body is) without first explicating what it is to be Dasein. That this is so for Heidegger will become clearer as we proceed through his categories of entities which don't have Dasein's way of being in Section II.

16 For his part, Dreyfus does not appear to address these difficulties, though his appeals to Merleau-Ponty in his commentary display his discomfort with this aspect of Heidegger's position.

17 More troubling still are Heidegger's remarks about embodiment in his Davos debate with Ernst Cassirer in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. R. Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), Appendix II). There Heidegger speaks of Dasein as being 'to a certain extent . . . fettered in a body' (p. 181). It is, however, through this 'fetteredness in the body' that Dasein 'stands in a particular condition of being bound up with beings' (p. 181). In other words, embodiment, as a dimension of thrownness, places Dasein in 'the midst of beings'. Despite this apparently essential role, Heidegger here speaks of Dasein's 'incursion' into beings as 'always spiritual and, in the ultimate sense, accidental' (p. 181). These remarks thus underscore, at the very least, the *secondary* status of the body, relative to Heidegger's attempts to delimit 'the original unity and the immanent structure of the relatedness of a human being' (p. 181). Whether they relegate the body to a different category (or make for its 'disappearance' altogether) is an issue I address in Sections II and III.

18 Heidegger does, however, say that 'even entities which are not worldless – Dasein itself, for example – are present-at-hand "in" the world, or, more exactly, *can* with some rights and within certain limits be *taken* as merely present-at-hand' (*BT*, 82). What I take Heidegger to mean here is that there is a standpoint from which Dasein can be regarded as a thing, as something which has physical attributes. He is quick to point out that such a standpoint involves a neglect of just those characteristics that pick out Dasein *as* Dasein: 'To do this [take Dasein as something present-at-hand], one must completely disregard or just not see the existential state of being-in' (*BT*, 82). I try to spell out what Heidegger means here by 'disregard' in the discussion to follow.

19 Of course, the body can break down, and so become an object of our explicit attention, but this fact does not, in and of itself, mark a separation between the body and items of equipment (except, perhaps, for the degree of interest we take in bodily breakdowns, as opposed to those in other items of equipment). See Division 1, Chapter 3, §16 of *Being and Time* for Heidegger's discussion of the *un*ready-to-hand: the kind of obtrusiveness he describes there might be seen to be applicable to parts of our body when they're not functioning properly.

20 Here I find a passage from Merleau-Ponty to be especially clear on this point; in *Phenomenology of Perception*, he writes:





> I move external objects with the aid of my body, which takes hold of them in one place and shifts them to another. But my body itself I move directly, I do not find it at one point of objective space and transfer it to another, I have no need to look for it, it is already with me – I do not need to lead it towards the movement's completion, it is in contact with it from the start and propels itself toward that end.
>
> (p. 94)

21 One may get the impression here that I am glossing over important distinctions in speaking of limbs like arms, internal organs like hearts and kidneys, and body parts like eyes all as *organs*. There would seem to be serious differences among these items, most prominently manifest in the distinction between voluntary and involuntary movements: the animal excercises its capacity to walk by moving its legs, but it's unclear, to say the least, that a similar locution applies to the functioning of its liver. In his discussion, it does not appear that Heidegger is particularly sensitive to these sorts of distinctions, but I do not think that this is simply carelessness on his part. On the contrary, given his ultimate conception of animal life, discussed below, the distinction between what an animal *voluntarily* excercises and what, in its body, just happens of its own accord is ultimately a specious one: what Heidegger denies in the case of animals is any sense of *agency* on the basis of which such distinctions might be supported. Matters are more complex in the case of human beings, where the notion of agency does apply: I discuss some of these complexities below.

22 These kinds of distinctions between animals and human beings have lately been discussed at some length by John McDowell, in his *Mind and World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), especially at pp. 114–23. It is interesting to note that on this issue, McDowell acknowledges that he is borrowing heavily from Gadamer's discussion in *Truth and Method*, which in turn owes a considerable debt to Heidegger's philosophy. I have not, however, been able to find in Gadamer a reference to these specific lectures. See also Simon Glendinning, 'Heidegger and the Question of Animality' (*International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 4(1), pp. 67–86), which, on roughly Derridean grounds, is highly critical of Heidegger's sharp distinction between animals and human beings (though, surprisingly, Glendinning cites McDowell as a corrective to Heidegger's position). I am not concerned, in this paper, to defend Heidegger's insistence on the separation between the human and the animal; rather, my aim here is to assess the impact of this insistence on the question of where to place the human body in his phenomenology.

23 Consider the following passage:

> When we say that the lizard is lying on the rock, we ought to cross out the word 'rock' in order to indicate that whatever the lizard is lying on is certainly given *in some way* for the lizard, and yet it is not known to the lizard *as* a rock. If we cross out the word we do not simply mean to imply that something else is in question here or is taken as something else. Rather we imply that whatever it is is not accessible to it *as a being*.
>
> (*FCM*, 198)

24 We have thus come full circle back to the criticisms levelled at presence-at-hand: the concepts associated with presence-at-hand were seen to be insufficient for picking out bodily movements *as* meaningful gestures and

actions, and the same holds for the notion of a capacity. In the first instance, those criticisms led to a consideration of readiness-to-hand as a candidate category for the human body, but it was precisely for the deficiencies in this latter category that Heidegger's appeal to capacities seemed to promise a remedy. The three candidates thus push and pull against one another, so that no one of them seems exactly suitable.

25 Similar remarks can be found in his *Nietzsche*, for example:

> Our being embodied is essentially other than merely being encumbered with an organism. Most of what we know from the natural sciences about the body and the way it embodies are specifications based on the established misinterpretation of the body as a mere natural body.

See *Nietzsche*, Vol. 1 (*The Will to Power as Art*), trans. D. F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), Chapter 14 (citation from pp. 99–100). These later remarks contrast sharply with Heidegger's talk of 'neutrality' and 'fetteredness', and may even appear to contradict his earlier outlook. It's not clear to me that this is so, since Heidegger's concern in the earlier material is primarily to distance his explication of Dasein from any consideration of the workings of 'a mere natural body'. What I'm suggesting in this paper is that Heidegger's existential analytic helps to remedy such a 'misinterpretation' of our embodiment, and helps to bring the more appropriate interpretation into view.

26 The distinction I'm after appears to be under discussion in the following difficult passage, wherein Heidegger writes:

> Every explanation, when we speak of an explanation of nature, is distinguished by its involvement in the *incomprehensible*. It can be flatly stated that *explanation is the expository interpretation of the incomprehensible. . . . Nature is in principle explainable and to be explained* because it is in principle incomprehensible. It is *the incomprehensible pure and simple*. And it is the incomprehensible because it is the *'unworlded' world*, insofar as we take nature in this extreme sense of the entity as it is discovered in physics.
>
> (*HCT*, 217–18)

Though Heidegger in this passage refers to explanation as a kind of interpretation, 'expository interpretation', he clearly distinguishes it from his usual meaning of interpretation, namely making explicit the as-structure of the 'worlded' world. The body-as-interpreted (in Heidegger's standard sense of interpretation) means the body-as-meaningful, as intentional, and thus as something worldly. Recall, for example, the difference discussed above between describing a bodily event as an action (like waving) and an arm's going up (at a certain speed and in a certain direction): the former characterization is an interpretive rendering of the body, whereas the latter might play a role in scientific explanations.

27 Versions of this paper were presented to the Continental Philosophy Workshop at the University of Chicago, and to the Philosophy Departments at Dartmouth College and West Virginia University. I would like to thank the members of the audiences for their questions, comments, and criticisms. I would also like to thank Hubert Dreyfus, Randall Havas, Wayne Martin, Karen Pilkington, David Stern, and an anonymous referee for comments on written versions of the paper. I am especially grateful to Steven Affeldt and Irad Kimhi for discussing earlier drafts at length with me.



# 10

# Being and the Living

*Didier Franck*

Who are we? What essence do we bear, and whence is this essence determined? Do we still have an essence, or have we become the provisional figure for the decaying of essence? Are we as much as ever, or almost as much, as we say, the rational animal? But are animality or rationality, body, soul, or mind, adequate to our being? In other words, has not the metaphysical interpretation of man as a rational animal reached its limit in that absolutization of human subjectivity that demarcates the end of philosophy by opening onto the truth of Being? Is it not through a constraint on Being itself that our essence is originally constituted? And how might we arrive at this Being, how might we properly be that which we have to be without destroying the history of that long error about ourselves—the history of ontology?

But to destroy is not merely to return to the things themselves, it is also to take account of a tradition by starting out from what made the tradition possible. It is thus just as necessary to define the essence of man as *Dasein*, while ceasing to understand it against the horizon of subjectivity, as it is to endorse, albeit in a restricted way, the concept of the rational animal. Since man's rationality is the distinctive mark of his animality, the specific trait of his life, we cannot take the name of *Dasein* and assume the tasks that this name imposes upon us without first examining if and how our life, life as it manifests itself in us, can acquire an existential meaning.

Let us return to the context in which this problem first emerges. Having established that a fundamental ontology must follow the path of an analytic of *Dasein*, and having sketched out its guiding lines and set in place its cardinal concepts, Heidegger secures the originality of such an analytic with regard to all those disciplines with which it might be confused. In Section 10 of *Being and Time*, in order to distinguish his phenomenology of existence from a philosophy of life or a general biology that would include the fields of anthropology and psychology, he

Translated by Peter T. Connor

affirms that "life, in its own right, is a kind of Being; but essentially it is accessible only in *Dasein*. The ontology of life is accomplished by way of a privative interpretation; it determines what must be the case if there can be anything like mere-aliveness [*Nur-noch-leben*]. Life is not a mere Being-present-at-hand [*Vorhandensein*], nor is it *Dasein*."[1] This thesis is taken up again in Section 41, which Heidegger devotes to the determination of the Being of *Dasein*, and where he shows that care cannot be brought back to elementary drives that, on the contrary, are ontologically rooted in it. He goes on to point out that "this does not prevent willing and wishing from being ontologically constitutive even for entities that merely 'live'," and that "the basic ontological state of 'living' is a problem in its own right and can be tackled only reductively and privatively in terms of the ontology of *Dasein*."[2] The same stance reappears finally in Section 49, which aims at rejecting any medical characterization of death. If Heidegger acknowledges that "death, in the widest sense, is a phenomenon of life" and that "life must be understood as a kind of Being to which there belongs a Being-in-the-world," it is only to add right away that "we can fix its character ontologically only if this kind of Being is oriented in a privative way to *Dasein*," whereas biology and physiology can always treat *Dasein* as a theme by considering it as pure life on the same basis as animals and plants. While admitting that *Dasein* is also a living being since life is accessible in it, and conceding that *Dasein* can have a physiological death "co-determined by its primordial mode of Being,"[3] Heidegger nonetheless argues for the priority of the existential concept of death over any science or ontology of life.

These brief references dealing with the Being of life raise a number of difficulties. These concern *Dasein* itself and, beyond this, fundamental ontology in its entirety. Certainly, *Dasein* does not begin as a living being to which existence is subsequently added on, but rather, in the manner of everything that lives, it is born, reproduces, and dies.[4] How then can death, as the phenomenon of a life that does not exist, be co-determined by the primordial mode of *Dasein:* ecstatic temporal existence? And conversely, in what way can death, as the supreme possibility of existence, be co-determined by a life whose mode of Being is different? In short, is the life in *Dasein*, the life of *Dasein*, compatible with its existence? How can something ontologically foreign to *Dasein* be ostensible, thanks to *Dasein*, and in *Dasein?* How can existence be reduced to life? What significance can be granted to the phenomenological method, according to which access to a being is governed by its Being, if in order to grasp living and "life" one must proceed privatively, starting with a being that is ontologically other? Supposing this privative channel to be practicable, what pre-understanding of life would guide its trajectory? Wherein would this pre-understanding find its legitimacy and pertinence if understanding is precisely a structure of *Dasein*, an *existential*? More generally, against what horizon of meaning of Being and of negation can it be said that "life is not Being-present-at-hand nor *Dasein*" if universal phenomenological ontology is shared between these two modes of Being that have their possibility in two temporalities, one of which is derived from the other, and if the meaning of negation depends on the meaning of Being?





Are life and living phenomena forever at a remove from the clearing of Being, refractory to all ontology, "phenomena" that time cannot constitute, that have no temporal meaning, absolutely incomprehensible? As disconcerting as this question might be, it has been if not exactly asked then at least formulated by Heidegger himself when, having described the temporality of feeling and disposition, he ends Section 68b of *Being and Time* with this strange reservation: "It remains a problem in itself to define ontologically the way in which the senses can be *stimulated* or *touched* in something that merely has life, and how and whether the Being of animals, for instance, is constituted by some kind of 'time.' "[5]

But can the temporal constitution of life and the living be considered a separate, that is to say, in the end, a secondary problem? From the moment Being is understood in terms of time, does not the ontological analysis of animality assume on the contrary a decisive role? Is it not liable to disconnect Being from time, opening up once again the issue of the determination of the essence of man as *Dasein*, and shattering the very ground of fundamental ontology? Indeed, if the being of an animal were to be excluded from time, Being itself would thereby lose the exclusivity of its temporal meaning, and, if we live only by being incarnate in a body that testifies to our kinship with the animal,[6] the ontological detemporalization of the animal would imply that the living incarnate that we are is existentially inconceivable, and that we must abandon the name of *Dasein*.

The interpretation of animality and of life is in part the topic of a course given in the winter semester of 1929–30, entitled *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics (Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik)* and dealing with the concept of world. Having described in *Being and Time* the worldly character of the being with which we daily enter into relation, and having retraced, in *The Essence of Reason* (*Vom Wesen des Grundes*), the history of the word "world" along with the various meanings that have been attributed to it, Heidegger takes the path of a "comparative consideration," whose guiding thread is furnished by the following three theses: "The stone is without world, the animal is poor in world, man is formative of world." If each of these theses determines the essence of the stone, the animal, and man, it is not a matter, regarding the second thesis, of understanding animality from the standpoint of the world and its impoverishment, but of understanding poverty-in-world from the standpoint of animality. And to conceive the essence of animality, says Heidegger, is "to conceive the essence of life in general."[7]

The phenomenology of the living must first of all make sure of its theme by answering the question of knowing whether or not we can have access to the animal. For this possibility to be offered to us, it is necessary that the animal itself relate to something other than itself. Now whereas the stone does not enter into any relation with the Earth that supports it, whereas the stone is without world, the animal that stalks its prey or builds its nest is essentially open to its surroundings. The animal itself, therefore, points to a possible sphere of access. But an animal is not *Dasein*, and is thus not primordially constituted by being-with, and we cannot both share the same rapport to being. If world is the condition for any rapport to

being, the animal has a world because being is open to it, but it has no world because this opening is foreclosed. To have and not to have a world is to be poor-in-world in the sense of a privation, for only a being capable of having a world can be deprived of one.

What is this poverty-in-world that characterizes animality, and how can one define it positively if not by carrying out an ontological analysis of life oriented around the animal? And where might this hermeneutic begin if not with the fundamental proposition of zoology, according to which everything that lives is an organism? What then is an organism? It is that which has organs. What does "organ" mean? The term comes from the Greek *ὄργανον*: tool. An organism then, following Wilhelm Roux's formula, is a complex of tools. But conceived in this way, is not the organism similar to a machine, and are the organs nothing but tools? Notwithstanding that a machine is not purely and simply an arrangement of tools, if the eye serves to see and the hammer to hammer, this similarity should not be allowed to cover up more definitive differences. Whereas several people can use the same hammer, a living being sees only with its own eyes. "The organ is therefore a tool built into the user."[8] Such a definition supposes, however, that the organ is still understood as a tool, i.e., misunderstood. Where then is the essence of the organ to be sought? Generally speaking, that which can be used for something opens up a possibility for something else. To do so, that which is useful must, as such, be in possession of a possibility that constitutes its Being. In other words, to establish the difference between an organ and a tool, or more generally between an organ and an item of equipment, the difference must be defined right down to what it is they are capable of doing, to the mode of being and the ontological distinction of their possibility.

A hammer is used to hammer, and the making of it is complete when it can fulfil this function, when it is end-ready. Being ready for something (*Fertigkeit für etwas*) defines the constitutive possibility of the item of equipment as such. The hammer, however, will never be capable of hammering in the way the eye is capable of seeing. Being capable of something (*Fähigkeit zu etwas*) defines the constitutive possibility of the organ as such, that is, in its appurtenance to the organism. It is therefore the organism that possesses the capacity of seeing to which the ocular organ then belongs, and hence it is the capacity that is endowed with an organ, and not the organ that is endowed with a capacity.

What is the link between the capabilities of an organism and the organs assigned to them? Which organ might bring out this link most concretely? Heidegger chooses to describe not the complex organism of a higher animal but that of a lower, protoplasmic, single-cell animal that, since it seems to have no organs, is likely to reveal to us the essence of this link more clearly. Protoplasmic animalcules have no fixed form and have to create for themselves the necessary organs, which they afterward destroy. "Their organs are instantaneous organs (*Augenblicksorgane*)."[9] In infusoria, for example, the prehensile organs and the organs for movement remain in place when those used for nutrition come into effect. "Around each





mouthful, observes J. V. Uexhüll, "there forms a pocket which becomes at first a mouth, then a stomach, then the intestines and finally an anus."[10] The nutritional capacity is thus prior to the nutritional organs, whose appearance and disappearance it moreover regulates.

At this stage in the analysis Heidegger raises an objection and points out a problem. If one acknowledges that an organism produces its organs, is one not surreptitiously admitting that these are its equipment? Certainly, in the case of the infusoria, the very instantaneity of the organ precludes making it into an item of equipment; but one cannot distinguish between an organ and an item of equipment on the basis of their duration since a number of animals have permanent organs. Heidegger then adds: "It is also clear that *the organ and the item of equipment differ precisely and fundamentally in their relationship to time*, and this marks an essential difference between their modes of being."[11] This brief allusion indicates that the organ and the item of equipment must each have their mode of temporalization through which, in accordance with the main principle of fundamental ontology, their respective modes of being can take on meaning. Conversely, it is only when their appropriate temporalities have been exposed that it will be possible and legitimate to distinguish the Being of an organ from that of an item of equipment, the organism from the world, life from existence or from Being-present-at-hand. Thus it is solely the determination of the rapport of the organism and the organs to time that will in the end decide the ontological meaning of life.

We shall leave open the question of the temporal constitution of the living to take up the elucidation of the link between the organ and the organism, and to tackle the objection mentioned above. If the item of equipment is end-ready, if it is a finished product, the organ, subject to vital processes, knows nothing of this finishedness. This means that the organ remains assigned to the organism as capacity. The following fact is proof of this: in order to move, pseudopodes produce something that they then reabsorb by amalgamating it into the remaining protoplasm. But when this protoplasmic prolongation comes into contact with another microorganism, this latter will not absorb it. The organ is thus held in place by the very capacity that alone can annihilate it. The organ is retained in the service of the capacity, it is in its service. But how can the capacity make possible such a subservience if not by itself having primordially the property of service? The eye serves to see and could not do so were the capacity of seeing not itself in the service of the organism. It is not the eye that sees but the organism, and, in giving rise to the organ, the capacity gives itself over to itself, practices, advances toward that of which it is properly capable.

Can we, still in contrast to the utility of the item of equipment, illuminate this subservience of the organ and the capacity which founds it? Equipment is usable according to its "directions for use," a prescription that is not given with or by its Being-end-ready-for . . . since it springs from that which has presided over its fabrication. "By contrast, *that which is capable* is not subordinated to any prescription but *brings its own rule with it* and *rules* itself. It *propels itself* in a specific way

in its *being capable of*. . . . This self-propelling and this being-propelled toward that of which it is capable [*sein Wozu*] is only possible, for that which is capable, if being-capable is in general a drive-activity [*triebhaft*]. There is capacity only where there is drive."[12] It is therefore because the capacity of the organ—the mode of constitutive possibility of its Being—is impulsive that the organ is ontologically distinct from the item of equipment. There is nothing impulsive in the readiness to hammer of a hammer; everything is impulsive in the being-capable-of seeing of an eye.

If with the drive (*Trieb*) we have arrived at the essence of capacity, which is to say the essence of the organ in its appurtenance to the organism, it should now be possible to gain access to the Being of the organism itself. Being-capable-of . . . is to be self-driven toward that of which the capacity is capable: toward itself. Capacity therefore implies a relationship to self that one finds in the concepts of self-regulation and self-preservation by which the organism is customarily defined. How is this "self" that is implied in the capacity to be thought? In function of the capacity alone, and without having recourse to an entelechy or any sort of vital force. To say that the capacity drives itself toward that of which it is capable is not to say that it turns away from itself to expend or lose itself in something else: on the contrary, in this drive-movement, the capacity itself never stops appropriating itself (*sich zu eigen*), never ceases to be in the process of its own appropriation of itself. The fundamental trait of capacity is property (*Eigentümlichkeit*), which here obviously has no significant or categorical attribute, but which denotes a mode of being as irreducible to existence as it is to Being-present-at-hand, that division that runs through and sustains all of fundamental ontology. The drive's self-appropriation takes place without reflection, and this is why Heidegger refuses to speak of an ipseity of the capacity or the organism. "We reserve," he writes, "the expressions 'self' and 'selfhood' to characterize *the specifically human property, its* being-in-appropriation-of-itself, and for this reason we say: everything which has the nature of a self, of a being which, in a general sense, has the character of a person (everything which is personal) is property, but not all property has the nature of a self or of an I."[13]

We are still far from having arrived at a sufficient concept for the organism, for we have left aside that of which the capacity is capable, that "for which" or in view of which (*wozu*) there is capacity. Capacity is, for example, capable of seeing. But what is vision here? The worm sees the mole; this means: it flees before the mole, it behaves in a certain way toward the mole. Being-capable-of . . . is thus capable of a behavior (*Benehmen*). To ascertain the behavior we must proceed from what we have already learned, namely the instinctual property of the capacity and of the organism. By propelling itself toward that of which it is capable, the capacity doesn't dwindle away in self-expropriation. There is consequently in this appropriation something held back that cannot fail to affect the behavior. In behaving amidst that





which surrounds it an animal does not expulse itself outside of itself; on the contrary, it withdraws into itself, absorbed in and by its drive. "Behaviour as a general mode of being is only possible on the basis of *the being absorbed* [*Eingenommenheit*] in itself of the animal. We characterize *the being-alongside-itself specific to the animal*—which has nothing to do with an ipseity of man behaving as a person—we characterize this being-absorbed in itself of the animal which makes any behaviour possible, as *captivation* (*obnubilation: Benommenheit*)."[11] In the same way that being-in-the-world is fundamentally constitutive for *Dasein*, captivation is the essential structure of animality and must be explicated in terms of the animal's behavior, its drive-capacity.

How does this captivation manifest itself in behavior? Following Heidegger, let us borrow an observation from entomology. A bee is set in front of a bowl with enough honey so that it cannot take it all in at one sitting. It begins to eat and then, a moment later, stops and flies away, leaving the remainder. What has happened? The bee has noticed that there was too much honey, that it could not suck it all up and it has therefore terminated its drive activity. This explanation is unacceptable. In effect, the following experiment has been carried out: if, while the bee is sucking in the honey, its stomach is carefully cut open, the bee continues to suck in while the honey runs off behind it. This proves that the bee had not noticed the abundance of honey—nor moreover the disappearance of its abdomen—and that it continues to persist in its drive. Absorbed in and by this, it does not have the opportunity to en-counter the honey in order to ascertain its presence. Why then does the bee stop taking in the honey when it is not deprived of its abdomen and remains organically whole? Because it is satisfied, and the satiation inhibits the drive. But the fact that the satiation is necessarily linked to the food in no way implies that it is connected to the bee's having noticed the abundance of food. Strictly speaking, the drive is not directed toward an object, it has no object; it is a behavior relating to something that is never perceived as such. In our example the drive is captivated by the honey, and, when it becomes inhibited, the bee flies off to the hive.

This new behavior is just as captivated as the first. How does the bee find its way back? Thanks to experiments conducted by Bethe, Radl, in his *Investigations into the Phototropism of Animals* of 1905, is able to offer an explanation. A hive is set up in a meadow. The bees become used to it. The hive is then moved back several meters. Now, when returning to the hive, the bees first head for the spot that now stands empty, and only return to their colony after having looked all around. Why? What draws them in that direction if neither the scent around the hive nor even the landmarks on the ground can direct them on their way since the bees' territory ranges over several kilometers? How does the bee return to its dwelling? It takes its cue from the sun. When it flies away, the bee has the sun behind it at a certain angle. Given that little time elapses between the bee's departure and its return, the position of the sun barely changes at all, and so it finds its way back to the hive by positioning itself in front of the sun at the same angle. Another experiment confirms this interpretation: if one captures a bee at the

spot where it has come to gather honey and encloses it in a box long enough for the sun to change position, then when it is released it flies off at an angle identical to the one it made when it left the hive.

What is happening in this behavior and what does it teach us about captivation? The bee does not, in one way or another, take its bearings in order to orient itself, for, absorbed in its drive, it is given over to the sun as to a structural element of that drive. The bee never apprehends the sun *as* sun. The animal's captivation signifies this impossibility of apprehending a being as being and this impossibility is the condition of possibility of its absorption in and by the drive. To state that captivation is the essence of animality is to say that the animal is not self-sustained in the manifestation of the being as such. Propelling itself from drive to drive, it is essentially at a remove from the revelation of Being, and this is why "the animal is so to speak suspended between itself and its environment without either of these being experienced *as* being."[15] In short, the drive does not understand the *as*.

The animal nevertheless has access to that toward which it behaves. How might we describe this openness specific to captivation, and also that to which the animal is open and which nevertheless cannot be present to it in its being? The drive that absorbs the bee in the movement toward the hive is in the service of the nutritional drive. Each drive is thus in itself pushed toward or by other drives, and this drive from drive to drive keeps the animal within a circle (*Ring*) of drives that it cannot get out of. Encircled by its drives, the animal is, however, open to something else. In what way? In the mode of a setting aside. The behavior of the drive always has the character of a setting aside (*Beseitigung*). Exemplary in this respect is the sexual behavior of certain insects. After copulating, the female devours the male. Thus for the female the male is not simply a living fellow creature but a sexual partner or her prey, and the one excludes the other. "The behaviour 'sets aside,' that is to say it is in relation to . . . but in a way such that the being as being can never essentially manifest itself."[16] The animal is open to something else only in a repulsive mode thanks to which it can be absorbed in the drive proper.

Having defined the openness characteristic of captivation, it is now possible to determine the essence of that to which the animal relates in its drive behavior. The animal does not relate to its environment as to a manifest surrounding world, nor is it associated with it in a mechanical way. Inasmuch as it is capable of . . . , the animal opens onto something else in such a way that this other thing can play a role in the drive capacity. The bee is open to the sun as to a beacon, as to that which sets in motion and disinhibits its drive. But why must the drive be disinhibited? Let us consider the drive itself, leaving aside the behavior to which it gives rise. It possesses an "internal ex-tension [*innere Gespanntheit*],"[17] a tense restraint, an accumulated load, a constriction, an inhibition that needs to be lifted in order to become a behavior. This means that the drive must be a priori open to a disinhibiting factor that will never be manifest to it since it is what allows the behavior, and therefore the animal, to appropriate its "self." Encircled by its drives, the animal is thus necessarily open to a circle of disinhibition, and this "self-encircling is not





an encapsulating but precisely the *drawing open* of a surrounding [*ein öffnendes Ziehen eines Umrings*] within which any disinhibiting factor can disinhibit."[18]

We are now in a position to establish the conditions of possibility for the excitability in terms of which certain physiologists have defined "living matter," and to answer the question of how the senses of a being that is merely alive can be *stimulated* and *affected*. Excitation and reflex occur only whenever there is disinhibition. That which is merely alive must first be open to whatever is likely to concern it, and "it is only when this *preliminary relation of the excitable* to that which can excite has already the character of a drive and of the drive encounter (*Entgegen*) that something like the release of excitation is possible in general."[19] We can also understand why different species of animal do not react to the same stimuli; they are not constituted by the same circle of disinhibition for, among other reasons, they do not all live in the same milieu. Whatever the intensity of a sensory stimulation may be, for example, it can still remain without effect. The lizard that hears the slightest rustling in the grass does not hear a rifle discharged in its nearest vicinity, a noise that makes even a distant bird flee.

Let us recapitulate before proceeding. The phenomenology of the living and of the organism began with a comparison between the organ and the item of equipment, and was developed by advancing the organism as the constitutive capacity of the organ, and ended up by emphasizing behavior as the mode of being of the organism and captivation as the condition of possibility of the drive behavior. The organism is thus as such neither a complex of tools nor a collection of drives or reflexes but "the capacity of behaviour in the unity of captivation."[20] It cannot be reduced to the body, and the relation to an environment belongs to its very essence. The organization of the organism is not a morphological fact but must be conceived in function of the circle of possible disinhibition. To F.J.J. Buytendijk's argument that "the link between the animal and its environment is almost as intimate as unity of body," Heidegger rightly rejoins that "the animal's unity of body is founded, as unity of the animal body, in the *unity of captivation*, that is the *self-encircling by the circle of disinhibition* within which, for the animal, the environment can unfold. Captivation is the fundamental essence of the organism."[21]

Should not this last proposition now replace the second of our guiding theses? Is not the captivation of the animal more essential than its poverty-in-world? In light of what has been learned, let us return to the initial determination of animality. If world means having access to being, then the animal has a world since it is open to something else, but if the world means having access to being *as* being, then the animal does not have a world since it is captivated. Hence can one still speak, using the word in its fullest sense, of the *poverty* of the world of an animal whose openness to that which disinhibits the drives forecloses the *as*? Is not to qualify the animal as poor in world to tacitly understand it as a modification of ourselves and not the way it is in itself? Must not the thesis that the animal is poor in world be abandoned on account of its phenomenological inauthenticity? If this were the case, one would have to conclude that captivation, as the essence of the animal but

separate from it, situates the poverty-in-world as an expression of our own rapport to the animal. Is this not however a premature conclusion? Apart from the fact that the concept of world has not been adequately elaborated, the objection Heidegger makes here against his own thesis presupposes that the retreat of being outside of manifestation constitutes the totality of captivation and that the essence of the organism has been entirely constructed. But the expulsion of the animal outside of the manifestation of being as such is only a moment in captivation, and the foregoing analysis of the organism is incomplete. Only an exhaustive characterization of the organism will allow us to decide if the primordial principle of animality consists in captivation or in poverty-in-world.

We can now assess the importance that the interpretation of the merely alive assumes in universal phenomenological ontology. This is not a problem of local or secondary interest. The irreducibility of life to being and to time would be of little significance if *Dasein* were not alive and could be thought without organs. Now it is essential—although this necessity was something that Heidegger never took into account—that *Dasein* have hands so that, all metaphors aside, the being of the being that it is could be named being-at-hand. And as indispensable as it may be to distinguish between organ and equipment, the being of the equipment as being-at-hand presupposes the being of the hand, something that nothing in the hermeneutic gives us to understand since the ecstatic constitution of existence cannot be reconciled with its incarnation.[22]

Is this to say, however, that the being that we are must posit the name of *Dasein* in order to be able to echo the life that is incarnate in it? Can the necessity of such a mutation be truly established when it stems from the being-at-hand or close-at-hand that we are not? In brief, for incarnate life to prompt the designation of our being as *Dasein*, it does not suffice that we be alive; it is above all necessary that *Dasein* itself witnesses that the life that does not exist is "more essential" to it than existence. And where might such a witnessing take place if not there where *Dasein* properly appears to itself: in anxiety?

It is hardly necessary to go over in detail the analysis of anxiety that assumes such a cardinal methodological function in the existential hermeneutic. At the end of Section 40 of *Being and Time*, after having justified the privilege of anxious disclosure, Heidegger makes an odd remark, which he goes on to comment on in an even odder way. "Anxiety," he notes, "is often conditioned by 'physiological' factors." Of course, this is indeed a descriptive moment, but in view of the context within which it is inscribed it cannot fail to surprise. Having made this observation, Heidegger adds: "This fact, in its facticity, is a problem *ontologically*, not merely with regard to its ontical causation and course of development. Only because *Dasein* is anxious in the very depths of its Being, does it become possible for anxiety to be elicited physiologically."[23] Why does this etiology of anxiety pose, as Heidegger emphasizes, an *ontological* problem? If anxiety can have an organic cause, this





means that the very affect of freedom[21] is subject to conditions, and that life belongs to the being proper of *Dasein*. Now it is possible, except for the major ontological contradiction, that the anxious freedom of *Dasein* is a conditional freedom and that life, which is captivation, is profoundly rooted in *Dasein*, which is understanding of Being. Where is the source of this contradiction to be located if not in the *Being* of the being that anxiety reveals? We have already seen that the physiological release of an excitation cannot come about without that which is excitable first being open, in the form of the drive and the drive encounter *(l'encontre pulsionnel)*, to that which can excite. Consequently, the *Dasein* whose anxiety is physiologically conditioned could never reveal itself to itself, in the truth of its existence,[25] if it is not firstly a living driven being *(un étant pulsionnel vivant)* whose meaning is neither ecstatical nor categorical. On the other hand, a life drive will never release anxiety, which is essentially Being-toward-death, if it is not first to some extent linked to anxiety. And how would it be so without being a death drive working on the principle of a life drive? Anxiety thus has its origin in the intertwining of the death and life drives, and this is precisely where the elucidation of the organism stumbles, and incarnate life is "more essential" than existence because it precedes the truth of existence. Therefore, resoluteness being motivated by the drive, we must stop understanding ourselves as *Dasein* and temporality and think ourselves as living, driven flesh [*chair pulsionnelle vivante*], a property on the basis of which drive, path, and thought must henceforth be interrogated.

But does this resignation of existence enable us *ipso facto* to think our incarnate relationship with the animal? What does "to stop understanding ourselves as *Dasein*" mean? Nothing less and nothing other than ceasing to make the ontological difference. Formulating this idea for the first time, Heidegger declared: "The distinction *is there*, that is to say, it has the mode of being of the *Dasein*: it belongs to existence. Existence means, as it were, "to be in the performance of this distinction. Only a soul that can make this distinction has the aptitude, going beyond the animal's soul, to become the soul of a human being. *The difference between being and beings is temporalized in the temporalizing of temporality.*"[26] What does this mean if not that in the operation of ontological difference—and this operation is its whole existence—*Dasein* institutes the abyss that separates it from the animal or, the other way around, that only the relegation of ontological difference can render our bodily animality thinkable. And since temporality exclusively constitutes the meaning of the Being of *Dasein*, or already of subjectivity, is this not also to say that life is incarnate without either Being or time? This last proposition means, first, that the mobility of that which is alive is ungraspable within the vulgar or ecstatic horizon of concepts of time, and, further, that in order to think incarnate life one must either construct a new concept of time—but why persist in calling *time* something that has never been conceived in that way?—or else one must go back to that property of which time is only a mode among other possible modes.

It is therefore necessary to cease to determine the essence of man as *Dasein* if due consideration is to be given to its incarnation and to its life. This necessity

cannot, however, be taken as established and assured in its possibility as long as *Dasein* has not once more and by itself witnessed, in short as long as it has not renounced, so to speak spontaneously, the understanding of Being. And where might this happen if not, once again, in anxiety? Now what does anxiety include and disclose? "It discloses *the world as world.*"[27] But is this statement comprehensible if the two meanings of the *as*, the hermeneutic and apophantic, as these are distinguished and articulated in the analysis of understanding and the statement, presuppose the disclosure of the world? The world *as* world, the a priori of all understanding, is incomprehensible if one takes existential understanding as one's measure; and if the *as* designates the truth of Being itself,[28] then anxious *Dasein*, giving rise to a life of drives that is refractory to existence, ceases to relate to Being by demitting its own Being [*en se démettant de son être*]. Therefore the incarnate life drive that is ignorant of the *as* can never become, as Heidegger once wrote, "the other echo [*Widerklang*] of *Da-sein*, 'indeed' the beginning of overtness [*die beginnliche Eröffnung*] of the being in view of being."[29]

This is no doubt the reason why Heidegger held the phenomenon of body to be "the most difficult problem."[30] Indeed, since we *are* incarnate, the body ought to be rooted, in the manner of everything that results from our Being, in existence, but as *alive* it cannot be so. Body, which presents itself as outside of Being in the heart of that which is only through Being, constitutes then the greatest difficulty in a thinking of Being that it exposes to its limits. The ecstatic determination of man's essence implies the total exclusion of his live animality, and never in the history of metaphysics has the Being of man been so profoundly disincarnated. If it might be necessary, in order to pose the question of Being and to understand our Being in this question, to reduce that which the traditional definition of man as rational animal concedes to captivation, it nonetheless remains that the disappearance of the body is *the phenomenological price* of the appearance of Being.

## Notes

1. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 50. Page references are to the pagination of the German edition, as indicated in the margins of Macquarrie and Robinson's edition.
2. Ibid., p. 194
3. Ibid., pp. 246 and 247.
4. Cf. ibid., pp. 374 and 385 concerning "generations."
5. Ibid., p. 346. We are quoting from the text of the earlier editions here.
6. Cf. *Letter on Humanism*, in *Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 206.
7. *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1986), vol. 29/30, p. 303.





8. Ibid., p. 321.
9. Ibid., p. 327.
10. Quoted by Heidegger, ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 328.
12. Ibid., pp. 333–34.
13. Ibid., p. 340.
14. Ibid., p. 347.
15. Ibid., p. 361.
16. Ibid., p. 368.
17. Ibid., p. 370.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 373.
20. Ibid., p. 375.
21. Quoted by Heidegger, ibid., pp. 375–76.
22. Cf. my *Heidegger et le problème de l'espace* (Paris: Minuit, 1986).
23. *Being and Time*, p. 190.
24. Cf. Ibid., p. 266.
25. Cf. Ibid., p. 307.
26. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 319.
27. *Being and Time*, p. 187.
29. Cf. ibid., §33.
29. *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 1936–38.
30. *Heraclitus*, seminar, 1966–67.

# Intentionality and the Semantics of 'Dasein'

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One of the striking features of Martin Heidegger's *magnum opus*, *Sein und Zeit*,[1] is that, while it explicitly claims to be carrying out a version of transcendental phenomenology (SZ, H38/E62), there is scarcely a mention of perhaps the key notion of Husserlian phenomenology, the fact and phenomenon of human intentionality.[2] This seemingly glaring omission is, of course, striking even on the reasonable historical hypothesis that Heidegger wanted to break radically with his former teacher and mentor at the time of the writing of SZ.[3] For, surely his break would be at its sharpest if it was explicitly set in contrast to its immediate predecessor. Moreover, one may well ask why did he overtly label his work "transcendental phenomenology" at all, only apparently to ignore what traditionally had been its primary phenomenon for analysis? Part of this puzzle can be solved by recalling Heidegger's opening call in SZ to recover the ancient question of the (manifold) meaning of Being (rather than, say, Cartesian consciousness) as the primary focus for philosophical activity.

[1] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), hereafter cited as SZ; English translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). All citations in this essay will give the German pagination first, then the English: e.g., H21/E42.

[2] Cf., e.g., Heidegger's remarks at H48/E73 about Husserl's and Scheler's conceptions of a person as a performer of intentional acts, where Heidegger objects that the "ontological meaning" of a person as such a "performer" has not been "positively" ascertained. Otherwise, there is very little explicit "thematization" of the phenomenon of intentionality in SZ.

[3] Heidegger's break with Husserl can be seen quite clearly in their collaboration on Husserl's "Phenomenology" article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. See Heidegger's critical notes collected in Walter Biemel, ed., *Husserliana IX: Phänomenologische Psychologie* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 237-301. For a helpful discussion of these documents, see Herbert Spiegelberg, "On the Misfortunes of Edmund Husserl's Encyclopaedia Britannica Article 'Phenomenology'," *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 2 (1971): 78-90.

Fortunately, there are also now available Heidegger's pre-SZ Marburg lectures, especially *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*,[4] where more than a passing reference is made to the phenomenon of intentionality, and especially to the need to "clarify" (*verdeutlichen*) the concept as used by Husserl (e.g., in analysing perception) in terms of a more primordial way of relating or "behaving" (*Verhalten-zu*) toward a world of practical projects (op. cit., p. 81). Finally, further light can be shed on this puzzle about Heidegger's break with Husserl if we examine some recent scholarship on Heidegger, from otherwise unexpected quarters, which sees Heidegger's break with Husserlian Cartesianism as on a par with the attacks by Dewey, Ryle, Wittgenstein and other "ordinary language" philosophers on Cartesian notions of the epistemic and metaphysical status of the Mental. In particular, in this essay the focus will be on John Haugeland's novel reading of what Heidegger means by 'Dasein' in SZ, as well as related interpretive work by Robert Brandom, Charles Guignon, and Hubert Dreyfus.[5]

Haugeland advances at least two bold and interrelated interpretive theses:

(1) On the basis of various textual clues, that 'Dasein' refers not to persons in any traditional sense, but to a concrete "emergent entity"; or, more formally, that 'Dasein' has a semantics different from that of traditional court- and mass-nouns. And, on the basis of (1),

(2) (Along with Brandom) that Heidegger's rejection of Husserlian Cartesianism (which follows from the former's transcendental-phenomenological analysis of our being-in-the-world) is strongly akin, if not tantamount, to a social behaviorist strategy in recent philosophy of mind and language (i.e., where all reference to human intentionality is to be replaced in our *Fundamentalontologie* to exclusive talk of a "member's" normalized dispositions to behave within some "herd" or set of ongoing social practices).

In this paper, I shall evaluate the textual evidence Haugeland cites for thesis (1), as well as cite other textual considerations which count against it. Finally, I shall argue against thesis (2) that Heidegger's phenomenology of our being-in-the-world more readily bears the marks of a broadly Aristotelian approach to the Mental, in particular, one which helps itself to an idiom of practical intentionality.

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*The Semantics of 'Dasein'*

The traditional reading of 'Dasein' which Haugeland wishes to supplant puts this term on a par semantically with Cartesian uses of 'ego' or 'mind', Kantian uses of 'transcendental ego', and Husserl's use of 'intentional consciousness' and 'transcendental ego'; hence, the traditional paraphrase or gloss of Dasein as a "person" in some suitable non-Cartesian sense. Haugeland maintains, however, that this is a fundamental misunderstanding of Heidegger's point, that 'Dasein' is not to be treated like most general terms. Indeed, if this interpretation is correct, then the true radicalness of Heidegger's analysis *vis-à-vis* the modern Cartesian tradition has yet to be fully appreciated.

Haugeland's interpretation draws heavily on Heidegger's description of Dasein (for now, human existence) in its "undifferentiated" form in the phenomenon of *das Man* (the impersonal Anyone). In brief, the latter phenomenon (or, underlying transcendental structure) is our existence as social creatures, and Heidegger's extended discussions of it bear the clear marks of his confrontation with the 19th century debate between the Hegelian notion of self-determining, conscious freedom within the goals, "good," and even "rationality" of an ongoing *Sittlichkeit*, and the Kierkegaardian and Nietzschean attacks on the "levelling crowd" and "herd."[6] For Haugeland, the *das Man* discussions suggest that 'Dasein' is

[4] These are found as volume 24 of Heidegger's new *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klosterman Verlag, 1975). There is also a recent English translation of these by Albert Hofstadter: Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

[5] Robert Brandom, "Heidegger's Categories in *Being and Time*," *The Monist* 66 (1983): 387-409; more will be said later on the important difference between Haugeland and Brandom. Charles Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983), especially chap. 2, §8, entitled, "Dasein as the 'Anyone'," where Guignon offers a line of interpretation similar to Haugeland's. Finally, Hubert Dreyfus, "Holism and Hermeneutics," *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1980); also his and Haugeland's, "Husserl and Heidegger: Philosophy's Last Stand," in: Michael Murray, ed., *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale, 1978), pp. 222-38. It is fair to note here that Dreyfus has provided the original "Berkeley connection" linking these works.

[6] More precisely, this debate emerged "first and foremost" for Heidegger through his contact with Wilhelm Dilthey's concerns to demarcate the human or "historical" sciences from the natural sciences. In fact, as Guignon has pointed out (op. cit., p. 45 ff.), Dilthey's allegedly "irreducible" notions of "life" (borrowed from some early writings of Hegel) and *objektiver Geist* (also adapted from Hegel) anticipate quite clearly the social character of Dasein's existence. However, what Guignon sees as a weakness (inconsistency?) in Dilthey, stemming from a prior Cartesian epistemological starting point (op. cit., p. 53 ff.), namely, that individual conscious lives turned out to be more than mere place-hold-

best viewed as picking out a vast, metaphysically "emergent" phenomenon or pattern of norms, normal behavioral dispositions, social roles, customs, and institutions generated and maintained by the often blind conformism of some "herd" of creatures.[7] On this view, it is problematic, but not absurd, to say that Dasein both consists entirely of its individual occurences and yet is "prerequisite for any of them being what it is" (p. 20). As an "emergent" entity, in some sense Dasein has a life of its own over and above its constituents; individual members come and go, handing down similar behavioral dispositions to succeeding generations. On Haugeland's view, then, all human institutions and social practices, not just the traditional person who participates in them, are equally (univocally?) the "astonishing diversity" that is Dasein.

On this view of Dasein, what has traditionally been called a "person" is now to be identified with an important sub-pattern or sub-institution of normal dispositions and social roles that go to make up an "atomic" member of an appropriate conforming community. Thus, on such a view, it is only contingently the case that a given member is identical with what we would ordinarily describe as an individual human body (or, even, with and individual soul). The principle of individuation (both for recognizing

ers in a social network (given their power of self-reflection), can arguably be taken as a strength, and one which Heidegger saw and sought only to "clarify" and not reject out of hand (see SZ, H47/E72, prior to his remarks referred to before about Husserl's and Scheler's notions of persons as "performers" of intentional acts). In fact, to anticipate my own position here, I would urge that more interpretive mileage can be gotten from SZ if it is read dialectically, here in the sense of presenting two apparently incompatible views of human personhood (say, Hegel vs. Kierkegaard) as necessary "moments" or aspects of one, conceptually "larger" phenomenon. In this way, though the *das Man* discussions are "first and foremost" in the order of discovery, they become "equiprimordial" (*gleichursprünglich*) in the order of (human) being with the results of the later discussions in SZ concerning resoluteness (Dilthey's *Selbstbesinnung*?), *Angst*, and being-towards-death. These latter, Kierkegaardian notions are found in both Dilthey and Heidegger (cf. Guignon, op. cit., p. 54 ff.): indeed, what better way to capture these features of unique, individual existence than by choosing the terms 'Dasein' and 'Existenz', which Kierkegaard deliberately chose as signs of radical particularity in contrast to Hegelian abstracta such as 'Sein'! See Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, translated by D. F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 99 ff.

[7] Here we may distinguish two strands of social behaviorism and identify each with Haugeland's and Brandom's positions, respectively. Whereas Haugeland is prepared to speculate parenthetically about some sort of "hard-wiring" which might underlie the conformist tendency of a given herd of creatures, reserving such latter stories as even more fundamental versions of the Scientific Image than social behaviorism, Brandom explicitly rejects such speculations as irrelevant and adopts a more radical, Rortyan extension of what we might call the Sellarsian programme in which even the Scientific Image of the world and ourselves is no less a set of contingent "social conventions" or practices than any other set of descriptive or explanatory practices. See Brandom, art. cit., footnote 10 on p. 409.



and being) one member is in terms of what Haugeland calls "units of accountability," i.e., with a subset of more or less integrated and (in Heidegger's phrase) "resolved" roles and normal dispositions subject to the mechanisms of (self-)censure and approval by the members of the herd (cf. Haugeland's discussion of Gaugin trying unsuccessfully to be both an artist and a parent). Thus, if we take seriously Haugeland's example of an entire beehive being one unit of accountability (p. 20), then conceivably on his reading of 'Dasein' two or more bodies, or even parts of several bodies, could function as a more or less basic "unit of accountability" in some herd. In sum, for Haugeland, a "herd-member" or "person" turns out to be whatever physical stuff counts as the most primitive institution or "unit of accountability" in the herd; or, for Haugeland's truly memorable Heidegger, "persons" are primarily "primordial institutions" and not particular practitioners of these institutions. To be sure, these institutions are always instantiated or manifested in some individual or other. But, because of their "emergent" status, qualitatively the same "institution" is not always exhibited in numerically the same individual. Thus, though "persons" too are always manifested in some individual or other, they are not necessarily manifested in the same individual. Let us now turn to Haugeland's textual argument for drawing this novel conclusion.

Haugeland argues that since 1) persons can be counted, i.e., semantically 'person' is a count-noun, but 2) 'Dasein' is (virtually) never used in this way by Heidegger, therefore 3) 'person' would not be a good rendering of 'Dasein'. Haugeland then supplements this negative conclusion with another: 'Dasein' also should not be viewed as a mass-noun, such as 'gold' or 'water', since unlike the referents of the latter terms, Dasein cannot be measured or weighed. Rather, Haugeland concludes, 'Dasein' should be in a different semantical category of nouns that stands for a peculiar sort of part/whole relationship. He suggests that 'Dasein' bears a likeness (though inexact) to 'tuberculosis', which he says functions neither as a count-noun nor as a mass-noun. Yet, much as there are (countable) cases of tuberculosis, there are (countable) cases of some widespread phenomenon Dasein. The cases of Dasein, then, are the variously discriminable, more and less primordial "units of accountability" within the conforming herd. Let us evaluate this argument.

I take the first premise to be uncontroversial. We should note, however, Haugeland's own qualification to his second premise with the phrase "virtually" and the two examples of count-uses of 'Dasein' he cites in his footnotes (SZ, 240, "das eine Dasein"; 336, "ein Dasein"). In the same vein, there is Heidegger's remark about the quasi-ethical feature of Dasein

called "in-each-case-my-ownness" *Jemeinigkeit*): "Because Dasein has *Jemeinigkeit*, one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: 'I am', 'you are'." (Note Heidegger's italics for 'personal'.) To the best of my knowledge, Heidegger never seriously considers attributing *Jemeinigkeit* (needless to say *Angst* or being-towards-death)[8] to G. M. or Christmas, needless to say calling them by first or second personal pronouns. Indeed, surely had Heidegger, who so carefully crafted the terminology of SZ, clearly intended the view of the "astonishing diversity" of Dasein Haugeland is tempted by, then he would have made the most of such rhetorical opportunities.

Secondly, surely the counter-instances which Haugeland himself cites allow for the equally, if not more, plausible hypothesis to be that Heidegger only occasionally appears to be using 'Dasein' in a non-count-noun way as (say) a treatise on whales might by speaking of the Whale doing, having, etc., when in fact the author could have said "the species whale" or "whales" do such and such. At the very least, then, Haugeland's textual evidence is ambiguous. Moreover, it seems reasonable that only if the majority of occurrences of 'Dasein' could only be read in his novel way, would Haugeland have a strong textual argument based on an unequivocal appeal to preponderance of use. But, as he himself implies, this is not the case. I conclude, then, that Haugeland's textual argument will not work.

Furthermore, even if we accept Haugeland's further argument that 'Dasein' functions like 'tuberculosis', we would still need an independent argument why even the latter term presents us with a different semantical category and consequently describes a different metaphysical relationship than the more traditional distinctions between types and tokens, species and specimens, universals and particulars. *Prima facie*, there would seem to be no reason not to view talk of 'T. B.' as talk of individual bodies instantiating a complex property or fact of various bodily states caused by specimens of a certain bacillus species.

Finally, when Haugeland writes that "the anyone . . . , the world, language, and even the sciences . . . all have 'Dasein's kind of being'" (p. 19), it is readily arguable that Haugeland has not been sufficiently attentive to how Heidegger uses the adjectival correlate of 'Dasein', namely, 'daseinsmäßig'. (I now start my counter-argument from textual-grammatical clues.) The "—mäßig" suffix is a standard German device for making an adjective or adverb out of a noun, but with the approximate meanings of "—like" or "in the manner of." Heidegger's

[8] A similar objection has been made by Dorothy Leland, "Abstract of Comments: Haugeland's Heidegger," *Nous* (1981): 27-28.



coinage here can reasonably be construed as meaning that the phenomena of language, a world of concerns, and the institutions of science are "like" or "in the manner of" Dasein. To my knowledge, Heidegger only says of institutions and practices that they are *daseinsmäßig*, and never says persons (or cases of Dasein) are. Cases of Dasein are simply that — Dasein. On the basis of this textual subtlety, I propose that we take Heidegger's coinage as saying that statements about language, a world of concerns, and the sciences are in some (to be explored) way adjectival upon statements about the more primitive logical subjects in Heidegger's *Fundamentalontologie*, namely, statements about individual cases of Dasein. In any event, this sort of "free-wheeling" interpretation is surely no weaker than Haugeland's grammatico-semantical detective work. In fact, on the assumption that there are no occurrences in SZ of individuals being described as *daseinsmäßig*, my counter proposal would presumably be even stronger than Haugeland's with its admitted textual counter-instances. I conclude, then, that Haugeland's novel reading is not conclusively argued for on the basis of the kind of evidence he cites.

But if Haugeland's reading is not (and cannot be) conclusively argued for, what reading should be put in its place? This brings us to a consideration of Haugeland's second thesis (which he holds in common with Brandom).

-ii-

If the second thesis is accepted, then it is reasonable for us to take Heidegger's rejection of Husserlian Cartesianism as tantamount to some form of social behaviorist strategy in the philosophy of mind and language. In particular, the results of Heidegger's *Fundamentalontologie* or analysis of Dasein's being-in-the-world (especially given its emphasis on the necessary, *das Man* aspect of our existence) should be viewed as an attempt to replace all statements about human intentionality with statements about various creatures' normalized dispositions to behave as members of some "herd," i.e., to behave in accordance with some ongoing set of social practices.[9]

The problem with this second thesis has been anticipated in part in our discussion of the first one. In the previous section we mentioned the cases of Dasein's *Jemeinigkeit*, *Angst*, and Being-towards-death. Each of these existential features clearly seems to require that Dasein be a "person" in a

[9] Guignon does not seem committed to this stronger reading, even though he embraces a version of Haugeland's semantic characterization of 'Dasein' (op. cit., §8, p. 104). In §9, however, he clearly attributes to Heidegger a "teleological" conception of everydayness. See especially p. 128.

traditional count-noun sense; at the very least, the *onus* is on Haugeland to show convincingly that institutions and social practices literally have such features and are not just *daseinsmäßig* in the sense alluded to previously. More importantly, though, these self-reflective existential features presuppose for Heidegger that Dasein in general be the kind of being for whom its own Being matters or is an issue. Moreover, having one's Being matter to it Heidegger eventually describes as being capable of existential "resolve" about whether or not to "appropriate" or "make one's own" (*zueignen*) a particular historical and social situation (cf. SZ, H299/E345 ff.). Finally, it is this distinguishing feature of Dasein (as opposed to what is non-Dasein) which Heidegger calls by the general name "care" (*Sorge*). The problem, then, for the second Haugeland(-Brandom) thesis is this: surely a being described as the locus of "care" would seem to be replete with intentionality, in fact with what we might call a practical intentionality in the classical Greek sense of that term made famous by Aristotle in his *Ethics*. As we shall see, Haugeland and, especially, Brandom are aware of this problem and consider ways to circumvent it. But before we examine the plausibility of their strategy, let us expand the case for the practical intentionality of Dasein.

Heidegger's Existential Analytic in SZ purports to describe the transcendental features or "phenomena" of human existence; or, equivalently, it purports to provide a phenomenology of what it means for a being such as Dasein to exist-in-a-world. Prior to his analysis of Dasein's normalized behavior as an instance of *das Man* (SZ, §27), Heidegger presents a rather famous portrait of Dasein as a producer-consumer who must deliberate about the most efficient means to its innerworldly projects (SZ, §§15-18). In this portrait, the "primordial" or conceptually most basic "meaning," or mode of Being of any being, is to come to sight either as the producer-consumer Dasein itself (presumably, with all the beliefs, desires, and purposes of such a being!), or as the instrumental "intentional objects" ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) for such a producer-consumer. The "intentionality" of such existence-in-the-world comes out more clearly in the corresponding passages in the 1927 Marburg lectures, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*. There, as was noted earlier, Heidegger argues for the need to "clarify" the rarified forms of perceptual intentionality, which Husserl claimed to have studied in an isolated or "bracketed" Cartesian consciousness, by showing them to be special forms of being instrumentally related to one's world of everyday concerns.[10]

[10] See *Grundprobleme*, §§9-12. In its strongest form here, Heidegger's argument is that if any sense at all is to be made of a "bracketed" and disinterested consciousness, then such states presuppose conceptually an understanding of what it is like to be an "interested,"





As SZ proceeds, though, even this initial transcendental-phenomenological portrait must be expanded. The innerworldly instrumental significance of beings is further shown to be a form of what we might call Weberian *Sinn* or social significance. Projects and rules for appropriate and inappropriate action are handed down to each case of Dasein by prior existing social practices and institutions; in a word, Dasein exists in *das Man* (SZ, §§25-27). And here, of course, the Haugeland portrait gains its strongest foothold.

But the portrait is not complete here either. Dasein's mode of being not only comes to sight as that of a producer-consumer, requiring both the various technical judgmental capacities for deliberating about the most efficient means-ends technologies and the bodily skills to carry out these plans.[11] Rather, Dasein is also described by Heidegger as that locus of "care" whose mode of Being is always an issue for it, whose historical and social situation must be variously "appropriated." This latter aspect of Dasein's "care" requires the deliberative and judgmental capacities to assess the relative merits of competing, overall ends or projects, and especially to raise questions of the form, "What overall good, or ordering of goods (handed down to me) do I the agent (and not just consumer-producer) want (now)?" It is in this latter sense, then, that Dasein's intentionality in its world of concerns is practical (and not just technical) in Aristotle's sense.[12] Moreover, in order to lessen the likelihood that Heidegger's account of human "care" merely bears a coincidental resemblance to certain features of Aristotle's account of human *praxis*, it is important to stress the strongly Aristotelian flavor of Heidegger's teaching and writing at the time of the writing of SZ, especially his various Marburg lectures on Aristotle which coincide with the SZ-formative period (the several years prior to 1927).[13] With all this, then, it would seem that the second

concerned consciousness in-action and in-a-world. See however Jay Rosenberg, *One World and Our Knowledge of It* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1980), especially chap. 6, for a defense of the claim that we can only attribute practical intentionality to an agent if we presuppose that agent's being able already to make perceptual judgments of the familiar Kantian, categorial types.

[11] Cf. SZ, H359/E410 ff.

[12] That "intentionality" is not merely an anachronistic superimposition on Aristotle's psychology and account of human *praxis*, see David Furley, "Self-Movers," in: Amelie Rorty, ed., *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), pp. 55-68.

[13] See volume 18 of the *Gesamtausgabe* for lectures on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1924) and volume 21 on Aristotle's *Logic* (1925-26); also SZ §29, H138/E178, where Heidegger calls the *Rhetoric* the first systematic hermeneutic of everydayness. Again, the impact of this research on the seemingly alien concerns of Husserlian phenomenology comes out nicely in the *Grundprobleme*, §§9-12. It is important to note here that these latter lectures are reworkings of the missing Third Division of pt. I of SZ promised by Heidegger at SZ

Haugeland(-Brandom) eliminativist-thesis can receive little or no textual support.

Brandom, in particular, is aware of this sort of problem.[14] This becomes clear when he interprets Heidegger's remarks about Dasein's *Mitsein/Mitdasein*, i.e., in accounting for Dasein's behavior (for Brandom, Dasein's way of responding) not just to beings ready-to-hand as equipment, but to beings who are likewise seeming agent-consumers (art. cit., p. 397 ff.). Brandom's difficulty is to eliminate all intentionalistic descriptions of Hegel's famous case of "mutual recognition," of two beings taking each other as someone who takes the Other similarly. "Taking . . . as" seems to be an irreducible residuum of intentionality in Dasein's *Mitsein*.

Brandom's solution, however, is to distinguish levels of behavioral response by Dasein: on the first level, Jones responds differentially to objects and strategies ready-to-hand, according to whether they are efficient *Zeug* or not. On a second level, Jones can respond differentially to those beings who respond similarly (or not) to the *Zeug* (objects and strategies) Jones is inclined to respond to; and these Others can of course respond similarly to how Jones responds to their *Zeug* and performances with that *Zeug*, and so forth. Thus, where there is such "recognized" similarity of response, there is community or *Mitdasein*. Thus, on the Brandom social behaviorist reading, even the phenomenon of *Mitsein* can be seen as nothing more than various levels of response-possibilities, all of which is made antecedently possible by the herd. And, thus, all signs of the Mental/Intentional in Heidegger's Existential Analytic can be dispensed with.

H39/E64, under the title, "Time and Being." Finally, there is also the crucial testimony of Gadamer, Jacob Klein, and others of being young students excited to hear an up-and-coming young Professor Heidegger open up Aristotle's works to them, especially the *Ethics*. See H.-G. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), especially p. 196.

[14] In informal conversations, Haugeland too has defended his position by pointing to Heidegger's "formal-existential" definition of *Sorge* at SZ §41, H192/E237, especially to the third aspect of Dasein's care as "being alongside [better: at-home-with" (*Sein-bei*)] (beings encountered within-the-world). This truncated phrase refers to Heidegger's discussions of how each of us quite naturally and unproblematically is "absorbed" into the familiarity of our everyday "cares" and interests (even conceptions of the good), with an equally natural (conformist) tendency to flee our subliminal awareness of the contingency of our way of life or "caring" *versus* other possible ones. Perhaps even the unique feature of Dasein, that its own Being is an issue for it, can be seen to be just another normalized disposition to behave, but (in anticipation of Brandom's move) at a second-level and in response to first-level dispositions and behaviors. Indeed, such social behaviorism might even be augmented by some sort of evolutionary-biological explanation of the "selection" for such a second-level disposition.



As subtle and penetrating as this maneuver is, though, there is good reason to believe it is not what Heidegger had in mind in SZ. First, simply the fact that Heidegger talks at great lengths about normalized behavior in his famous *das Man* discussions is not enough by itself to warrant either a necessary or probable inference to *Fundamentalontologie* as social behaviorism. For, other philosophers have analysed so-called "conventional" behavior, but with no intention of carrying out eliminativist strategies. (Cf., e.g., David Lewis' work on convention which both Haugeland and Brandom are clear to distinguish from their own on precisely this point.) Is there, then, any place where Heidegger even hints at their strategy?

Brandom cites the following, tantalizing passage:

> In that with which we concern ourselves environmentally, the Others are encountered as what they do; they are what they do. (SZ, H126/E163)

The last clause would seem to be just what Brandom (and Haugeland) are looking for. In fact, this social behaviorist reading would be a reasonable assessment of Heidegger's intent if the last clause simply said "they are their (bodily) behavior (and nothing else)." That, of course, would be clear evidence for thesis 2. However, the clause simply does not say this. In the first instance, the German "sie sind das, was sie betreiben" is readily (and I think more reasonably) construed as meaning "they are what they pursue/are busy about." Furthermore, even if the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of 'betreiben' as 'do' is kept, this of course does not automatically rule out hearing 'do' as a rich action concept instead of one referring to mere bodily behavior. Thus, whatever else this passage says against essentialist and traditional substance theories of personal identity, it does not clearly eliminate intentionality from fundamental descriptions of cases of Dasein. Indeed, in the broader context of SZ I have sketched above, Heidegger's *Fundamentalontologie* clearly seems to have a minimal commitment to embodied purposive behavior (which includes the "action" of creatures replete with practical intentionality and rationality). Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the second Haugeland(-Brandom) thesis, with its social behaviorist rendering of Heidegger's anti-Cartesianism, is tendentious at best.

To close this discussion, I shall make a further interpretive proposal and an important qualification about understanding the unity of SZ as a whole. First, I rather cautiously suggest that Heidegger's discussions of normalized behavior and the pervasiveness of social practices in human action be moved in the direction of a strategy in the philosophies of mind

and language like that of Jonathan Bennett in his *Linguistic Behavior*.[15] Bennett argues persuasively (*pace* Quine) that we can make sense of how complex, observable patterns of behavior can be taken as evidence for attributing to variously sophisticated creatures a range of capacities to "register," even believe, certain technical or practical information about their environments, to desire certain objects in their environments, on up the "intentionalistic ladder" to their having Gricean intentions of a complexity sufficient for "speaker meaning." Just how these individual "intentional lives" get subject to social practices or "conventions," is handled by Bennett according to David Lewis' model of a "coordination problem" between at least two rationally self-interested players with various "registerings" and desires. On this strategy, a more or less complex practical intentionality and teleology (even rationality) is attributed to creatures operating on their environments as the best way to explain their particular behaviors.[16] It would seem, then, that this Bennett-Grice-Lewis strategy would in general do more justice to the quasi-Aristotelian program I am arguing Heidegger lays out in his Existential Analytic. My dispute with Haugeland and Brandom, then, can be summed up as follows: Heidegger's anti-Cartesianism (in his break with Husserl) is not an attack on the Mental/Intentional *per se*, but on a philosophical tradition that separates it (and our knowledge of it) from our practico-intentional bodily existence. Heidegger's move is thereby analogous to rejecting Platonism not by adopting nominalism but Aristotle's *in rebus* view.

Yet, even this counter-proposal for "rationally reconstructing" Heidegger's project in SZ in light of current work in the philosophy of mind must be taken with great caution. Heidegger's puzzling remarks about truth as "disclosedness" (*Erschlossenheit*) at SZ §44 and about the "historicity" and "situatedness" of Dasein's understanding[17] make it extremely difficult to see SZ as ultimately containing anything akin to most traditional and recent work in the philosophy of mind. Importantly, this note of caution covers not only the eliminativist and dual-aspect, materialist strategies mentioned so far, but also the "transcendental" strategy Heidegger clearly opens with in SZ. Any and all such strategies

[15] Jonathan Bennett, *Linguistic Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[16] I am ignoring here how Bennett would handle questions of why a given creature has a particular intentionality "package" as opposed to a particular intentional state. Bennett seems committed to purely mechanistic explanations (say, in terms of adaptation, natural selection, and conditioning) for the former and, for him, more "basic" why-questions. See his discussions of the rising and falling of Stable Lake, op. cit., §§ 22-34, p. 75 ff., especially p. 81.

[17] For a helpful discussion of these parts of SZ, see David Hoy, "History, Historicity, and Historiography in *Being and Time*," in Michael Murray, op. cit., pp. 329-53.



would surely seem to run afoul of, indeed be contradicted by, "later" statements in SZ about the situatedness and historicity of all human understanding and "disclosedness" (including, quite explicitly, Heidegger's own). A careful reading of these parts of SZ, as well as related texts,[18] indicates that Heidegger's position is much more radical than any form of scepticism and fallibilism: the very idea of Truth, the way the World is independently of human efforts at cognition, and of our mental events and linguistic items corresponding to that World, is dismissed as incoherent (not just unknowable).[19] In a word, Heidegger's remarks seem to be tantamount to what Rorty and Putnam have recently defended as Anti-Realism.[20] Thus, if such a radical "Anti-Realism" is the ultimate[21] result of SZ, then all Images of ourselves (in Sellars' phrase), whether Manifest and Intentionalistic or Scientific and variously eliminativistic, or for that matter all "stances" toward ourselves (in Dennett's phrase[22]), whether physical, design, or intentional, are nothing but Images and Stances which reflect more of a decision or "resolve" on our part over time about how to view ourselves than they do the way we really are by Nature.[23] No particular Image or Stance, then, can intelligibly be

[18] See Heidegger's "On the Essence of Truth," and "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, David Krell, ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 113-88.

[19] Two notes here. First, there is at least one passage which does not square easily with this more radical thrust. Cf. SZ §39, H189/E228. Second, there is an undeniable and (I think) unavoidable "(social) verificationist" air to this whole position of which Heidegger seems to have some awareness. See his remarks at SZ H151-152/E193 about the difference between being meaningful and meaningless.

[20] See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Hilary Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

[21] I say "ultimate" here to complement my thus far "progressive" reading of the results of SZ. In fact, I think the work is dialectical, as noted earlier: it begins where the traditional apparent antinomies in the debate are and moves beyond them. However, given Heidegger's apparent Anti-Realism, "beyond" loses its Hegelian, absolutist and Realist overtones and presumably comes to have the force of a Wittgensteinian "dissolution" of a pseudo-problem. At least, I think that this is a fair description of the rhetorical dynamics involved in current discussions of Anti-Realism. See Richard Rorty, "Heidegger's Criticism of Nietzsche," *1984 Chapel Hill Colloquium in Philosophy*.

[22] Daniel Dennett, *Brainstorms* (Montgomery, Vermont: Bradford Books, 1978), especially his first essay.

[23] Cp. Heidegger's remarks at SZ §69b about the "derivative" status of Science from our interest-relative, "ready-to-hand" understanding of our world. For a helpful discussion of this position, see Joseph Rouse, "Kuhn, Heidegger, and Scientific Realism," *Man and World* 14 (1981): 269-90; also Guignon, op. cit., §13, pp. 182-94. However, for a more detailed criticism of realist strategies in the philosophy of science generally, see Larry Laudan, "A Confutation of Convergent Realism," *Philosophy of Science* 48 (1981): 19-49. Laudan, however, stops short of embracing Anti-Realism and seems content for

said to be a privileged one.

On this last note, then, it would seem that Heidegger only appears initially to be rejecting (Husserlian) Cartesianism in SZ as a bad transcendental-phenomenological analysis (or, "descriptive metaphysics") of our embodied, practical intentionality. If read dialectically, however, as SZ progresses Cartesianism comes to be rejected more for the realistic presuppositions it shares with both materialist and transcendental strategies. Traditional philosophy of mind, then, falls for Heidegger because traditional metaphysics-as-realism has fallen. It would seem that only with such a radical attack, then, does Heidegger's account of Dasein in SZ eventually address current work in the philosophy of mind. And, if my argument is persuasive, it is not by anticipating in 1927 any eliminativist metaphysical programs currently afoot.

now to play the role of sceptic about our ever knowing if our theories adequately "correspond." Finally, for a critical discussion of such views, see Jay Rosenberg, op. cit., and C. L. Hardin and Alexander Rosenberg, "In Defense of Convergent Realism," *Philosophy of Science* 49 (1982): 604-15.



# Heidegger's Critique of the Husserl/Searle Account of Intentionality*

BY HUBERT L. DREYFUS

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger seeks to undermine the Cartesian tradition of the priority of knowledge over practice. At first it looks as if Heidegger seeks simply to invert this tradition by arguing that detached contemplation is a privative modification of everyday involvement. More specifically, he seems to be saying that the detached, meaning-giving, *knowing* subject, still at the center of Husserlian phenomenology, must be replaced by an involved, meaning-giving, *doing* subject. But if one simply inverts the tradition, one risks being misunderstood and reappropriated, and, indeed, Dagfinn Follesdal, the best interpreter of Husserl's phenomenology, has been led to underestimate Heidegger's originality on just this point. In an article on the role of action in Husserl and Heidegger, Follesdal interprets Heidegger as holding that Husserl and the tradition overemphasized detached contemplation, and he agrees with what he takes to be Heidegger's claim that practical activity is the basic way subjects give meaning to objects:

> It has commonly been held that practical activity presupposes theoretical understanding of the world . . . Heidegger rejects this. He regards our practical ways of dealing with the world as more basic than the theoretical. . . . This idea of Heidegger's that . . . human activity plays a role in our constitution of the world,

and his analyses of how this happens, I regard . . . as Heidegger's main contribution to philosophy.[1]

Follesdal reports that "after he came to Freiburg in 1916 . . . Husserl clearly became more and more aware that our practical activity is an important part of our relation to the world."[2] He then tries to determine who deserves credit for this new interest in the phenomenology of practical activity. "It is possible that Husserl influenced Heidegger in this 'practical' direction," he notes. "However, it is also possible," he admits, "that it was Husserl who was influenced in this direction through his discussion with the younger Heidegger."[3]

Once one sees the depth of Heidegger's difference from Husserl on this issue, however, one sees that the question of influence is irrelevant. Much more is at stake than the relation of practice to theory. The real issue concerns two opposed accounts of intentionality. As used by Franz Brentano and then Husserl, "intentionality" names the fact that mental states like perceiving, believing, desiring, fearing, doubting, etc. are always *about* something, i.e., directed at something under some description, whether the extramental object exists or not. The mental property that makes this directedness possible is called the representational or intentional content of the mental state. By focusing his discussion on the primacy of the intentional content of action over the intentional content of thought, Follesdal misses Heidegger's radical claim that an account of intentionality in terms of mental content presupposes but

[1] Dagfinn Follesdal, "Husserl and Heidegger on the Role of Actions in the Constitution of the World," in *Essays in Honour of Jaakko Hintikka*, ed. E. Saarinen et al., (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1979), p. 371. A similar trivializing reduction of Heidegger's work to a practical variation on Husserl's is assumed by Mark Okrent: "[A]s soon as one realizes that, for Heidegger, intentionality is always practical rather than cognitive and that the primary form of intending is doing something for a purpose rather than being conscious of something, the structural analogies between the argument strategies of Husserl and Heidegger become apparent" (Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988], p. 10).

[2] Follesdal, "Husserl and Heidegger," 372.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 376.





overlooks a more fundamental sort of intentionality—a kind of intentionality that does not involve intentional content at all. Heidegger does not merely claim that practical activity is primary; he wants to show that *neither* practical activity *nor* contemplative knowing can be understood as a relation between a self-sufficient subject with its intentional content and an independent object.

What Follesdal assumes and Heidegger opposes is the traditional representational view of practice. To this day philosophers such as John Searle and Donald Davidson, who do not agree on much else, agree that action must be explained in terms of mental states with intentional content. Heidegger's attempt to break out of the philosophical tradition is focused in his attempt to get beyond the subject/object distinction that such views presuppose. In a lecture in 1929 he says, "My essential intention is to first pose the problem [of the subject/object relation] and work it out in such a way that the essentials of the entire Western tradition will be concentrated in the simplicity of a basic problem."[4] The basic problem is not which kind of intentionality—theoretical or practical—is more fundamental, but what sort of experience makes both kinds of intentionality possible.

Husserl defined phenomenology as the study of the intentional content remaining in the mind after the bracketing of the world, i.e., after the phenomenological reduction. Jerry Fodor calls such an approach to the mind "methodological solipsism." Heidegger opposes the claim underlying this method—the claim that a person's relation to the world and the things in it must always be mediated by intentional content, so that one can perform a reduction that separates the mind and its content from the world. As he puts it:

The usual conception of intentionality . . . misconstrues the struc-

[4] Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundation of Logic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 132.

> ture of the self-directedness-toward, the intention. This misinterpretation lies in *an erroneous subjectivizing* of intentionality. . . . The idea of a subject which has intentional experiences . . . encapsulated within itself is an absurdity which misconstrues the basic ontological structure of the being that we ourselves are.[5]

This makes Heidegger sound like what would now be called an externalist. It is as if he were claiming that mental states get their intentional content by way of some connection with the external world. But as we shall see, Heidegger's view is more radical. He wants to introduce a kind of intentionality that avoids the notion of mental content altogether.

Before we can fully appreciate Heidegger's project and decide whether he succeeds, we have to sharpen as much as possible the intentionalistic theory of mind he opposes. Just how is the subject/object distinction supposed to be built into all ways of relating to the world whether they be knowing or acting? Since Heidegger focuses on action as the area in which it is easiest to see that our experience need not involve a mind/world split, I too will concentrate on action. But since Husserl never worked out a theory of action, I will turn to the work of John Searle, who defends an intentionalist account of action of the sort Heidegger opposes. I will therefore first spell out Searle's formulation of the way the mind/world split is supposedly built into the experience of acting, and then present Heidegger's phenomenological critique. (Where Searle agrees with Donald Davidson I will also remind the reader of Davidson's view.)

It is generally agreed that our commonsense concepts of perception and action are causal concepts. Paul Grice showed that our concept of perception is that of a perceptual experience caused in the right way by the object perceived.[6] In

[5] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 63–64.

[6] Paul Grice, "The Causal Theory of Perception," in *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing*, ed. Robert Swartz (New York: Anchor Books, 1965).





the parallel case of acting, Searle and Davidson argue that our concept of an action is likewise causal. An action is a bodily movement which is understood as having been caused in the right way by something mental. Davidson thinks that, for a movement to count as caused in the right way, it must be interpreted as caused by brain states token identical with the beliefs and desires that count as reasons for the action. Davidson gives an account that requires attributing something like a prior intention. Searle denies this requirement, since actions can be spontaneous, but suggests that two other conditions must be met before a bodily motion qualifies as an action. *First*, a representation of the goal of the action must exist throughout the motion and must play a continuing causal role in shaping the action. Searle calls this continuing representation of the goal the "intention in action," thus differentiating it from the "prior intention" which corresponds to the initial representation of the goal of the action prior to the initiation of motion. *Second*, Searle maintains that the subject must experience the causal connection between the intention in action and the bodily movement continuously. Indeed, according to Searle, the experience of acting is just the experience of the bodily movement being caused by the intention in action.

Note that in his account of action, as elsewhere in his account of intentionality, Searle attempts a unique integration of logical conditions and phenomenological description. The standard analysis of action is "bodily motion caused by a reason." Searle incorporates a phenomenological analog of this analysis into his account of action by maintaining that the experience of an action must include a direct experience of the causal relation between the intention in action and the bodily motion. He argues that both the prior intention and the intention in action are causally self-referential. They both include in their conditions of satisfaction the requirement that the intention to bring about a goal cause the goal-directed

action. Thus an action is a bodily movement experienced as caused by my intention to perform it.

In his attempt to overthrow the subject/object account, Heidegger seeks to show (1) that intentionality without the experience of self-referential content is characteristic of the unimpeded mode of everyday activity, whereas Husserl's (and Searle's) mentalistic intentionality is a derivative mode that occurs only when there is some disturbance, and (2) that both these modes of intentionality presuppose being-in-the-world, a more fundamental form of intentionality that Heidegger calls originary transcendence, and that he claims is the condition of the possibility of both active and contemplative intentionality. In his lecture course the year *Being and Time* was published, he refers to this double task (when he speaks of Dasein he is speaking of human beings):

> The task of bringing to light Dasein's existential constitution leads first of all to the twofold task, intrinsically one, of interpreting more radically the phenomena of intentionality and transcendence. With this task . . . we run up against a central problem that has remained unknown to all previous philosophy.
>
> It will turn out that intentionality is founded in Dasein's transcendence and is possible solely for this reason—that transcendence cannot conversely be explained in terms of intentionality.[7]

### *Heidegger's Account of Primordial Intentionality*

In using Searle's account as a stand-in for Husserl's, I will highlight two aspects of Searle's view that Husserl presumably would have shared, both of which Heidegger rejects.[8] Searle points out that the experience of acting is phenomenologically

[7] Heidegger, *Basic Problem of Phenomenology*, p. 162.

[8] This is not to say that Searle was influenced by Husserl, nor that their accounts of the intentionality of perception and action are identical. Searle's account of the logical role of causality and thus of the necessary self-referentiality of the intentional content of the experience involved in perception and action is not found in Husserl.





distinguishable from the experience of being acted upon. I can have the experience of acting even if I am deluded—for example, paralyzed—and the bodily movement I take it I am causing is in fact not taking place. Conversely, if electrodes are applied to my brain, my body can be caused to move without my having an experience of acting. It follows from the above considerations that the experience of acting and the bodily movement it causes belong to two totally separate domains. Thus, according to Searle, the distinction between mind and world, what Husserl and Heidegger would call the distinction between subject and object, is built directly into the logic of acting:

> [J]ust as the case of seeing the table involves two related components, an Intentional component (the visual experience) and the conditions of satisfaction of that component (the presence and features of the table), so the act of raising my arm involves two components, an Intentional component (the experience of acting) and the conditions of satisfaction of that component (the movement of my arm).[9]

Heidegger questions phenomenological claims of the sort that accompany Searle's analysis of the logic of perception and action. He denies *first* that the experience of acting must be an experience of my *causing* the action, and *second* that the experience of acting must *represent the conditions of satisfaction* of the action.[10]

Searle begins his account of intentions in action by pointing out that we always seem to know during an action that we are

[9] John Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 88.

[10] Searle could give up his phenomenological claims and stick to the logical conditions of perception and action, viz., that they both must in some way be able to succeed or fail, and that action must be something we do, not what is done to us (and perception vice versa). But as long as he accepts the causal theory, he accepts the existence of the terms between which the causal relation holds, viz., physical events and mental experiences, and it is ultimately this ontology that Heidegger is challenging.

acting—at least in the sense that we experience ourselves as the source of our activity rather than as being passively moved about. Heidegger would agree, but he would point out that only in *deliberate* action is the experience of acting an experience of one's intention in action causing one's movement. In everyday absorbed coping, the experience of acting is instead the experience of a steady flow of skillful activity in response to one's sense of the environment. Part of that experience is a sense that when one's situation deviates from some optimal body/environment relationship, one's motion takes one closer to that optimal form and thereby relieves the "tension" of the deviation. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty would put it, one's body is solicited by the situation to get into the right relation to it. When everyday coping is going well, one experiences something like what athletes call flow, or playing out of their heads. One's activity is completely geared into the demands of the situation. One does not distinguish one's experience of acting from one's ongoing activity, and therefore one has no self-referential experience of oneself as causing that activity.

Aron Gurwitsch, a student of Husserl's, yet a perceptive reader of Heidegger, gives, in his interpretation of *Being and Time*, an excellent account of this nonintentionalistic, i.e., nonself-referential, awareness:

> [W]hat is imposed on us to do is not determined by us as someone standing outside the situation simply looking on at it; what occurs and is imposed are rather prescribed by the situation and its own structure; and we do more and greater justice to it the more we let ourselves be guided by it, i.e., the less reserved we are in immersing ourselves in it and subordinating ourselves to it. We find ourselves in a situation and are interwoven with it, encompassed by it, indeed just "absorbed" into it.[11]

[11] Aron Gurwitsch, *Human Encounters in the Social World* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1979), p. 67.





To get the phenomenon in focus, we can consider a Merleau-Pontyan example such as a tennis swing. (Since Merleau-Ponty attended Gurwitsch's lectures explaining Heidegger's account of comportment in terms of gestalt perception, there may well be a direct line of influence here.) If one is a beginner or is off one's form, one might find oneself making an effort to keep one's eye on the ball, keep the racket perpendicular to the court, hit the ball squarely, etc. But if one is expert at the game and things are going well, what is experienced is more like one's arm going up and its being drawn to the appropriate position, the racket forming the appropriate angle with the court—an angle we need not even be aware of—all this so as to complete the gestalt made up of the court, one's running opponent, and the oncoming ball.

The phenomenon, then, requires us to modify Searle's taxonomy as presented in his book, *Intentionality*.[12] *Action* does, as Searle claims, have a world-to-mind direction of fit—our actions bring the world into line with what we would want if we thought about it—but, contrary to Searle's account, *the experience of acting* has a *world-to-mind* direction of causation also. We experience the situation as drawing the action out of us.

Searle applies to perception the same analysis he applies to action. His example is seeing a flower:

> The seeing consists of two components, the visual experience and the flower, where the presence of (and features of) the flower cause the visual experience and the visual experience has the presence and features of the flower as the rest of its conditions of satisfaction. The content of the visual experience is that there is a flower there and it is self-referential in the sense that, unless the fact that there is a flower there causes this experience, the conditions of satisfaction do not obtain, i.e., I do not actually see that there is a flower there, nor do I see the flower.[13]

[12] Searle, *Intentionality*, p. 95.
[13] *Ibid.*

But just as skillful absorption does not involve an experience of acting separate from an action that it causes, so perception does not involve a subjective visual experience separate from and caused by its object. A nonmentalistic phenomenology of perception that parallels Heidegger's phenomenology of absorbed action is found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. There Merleau-Ponty describes the experience of perceiving as the experience of our openness to the world:

> The child lives in a world which he unhesitatingly believes is accessible to all around him. He has no awareness of himself or of others as private subjectivities. . . . For him men are empty heads turned towards one single, self-evident world where everything takes place. . . . It must be the case . . . that the unsophisticated thinking of our earliest years remains as an indispensable acquisition underlying that of maturity, if there is to be for the adult one single intersubjective world.[14]

While the image of an empty head gets at the phenomenological truth of direct realism, it is misleading in another respect. In perception we do not experience ourselves as passive receivers. By turning my attention to something I experience myself as enabling it to show up. Moreover, I can zoom in on it and reveal it in greater and greater detail. In the activity of looking I feel I am responsible for what I see. Thus *looking as experienced* has a mind-to-world direction of causation.

Common sense maintains an unstable mixture of a first-person and a third-person—an internal and an external—account of perception and action. A *private* experience causes or is caused by something in the *public* world. This ontologically unstable idea is expressed in our everyday concepts of perception and action. There then seem to be two possible positions for making the concepts consistent. Davidson accepts objective causation *of* brain states in the case of

[14] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 355.





perception and *by* brain states in the case of action, and treats the first-person experience as a matter of attribution. Searle starts from the first-person experience and builds the third-person causal account into the intentional content of the experience. Thus both are led to distort the phenomena. Merleau-Ponty speaks of "the prejudice of common sense," and Heidegger warns:

> The most dangerous and stubborn prejudices relative to the understanding of intentionality are not the explicit ones in the form of philosophical theories but the implicit ones that arise from the natural apprehension and interpretation of things by . . . everyday "good sense." These latter misinterpretations are exactly the ones that are least noticeable and hardest to repulse.[15]

Phenomenology rejects common sense in the name of the phenomena of everyday involved perception and action.

Heidegger's second point amounts to a rejection of Searle's claim that the intentional content of the experience of acting is a representation of the action's conditions of satisfaction, viz., a representation of my bringing about the state of affairs I am trying to achieve. But phenomenological examination shows that in a wide variety of situations human beings relate to the world in an organized purposive manner without the constant accompaniment of a representational state which specifies what the action is aimed at accomplishing. Examples are skillful activity like playing tennis; habitual activity like driving to the office or brushing one's teeth; casual unthinking activity like rolling over in bed or making gestures while one is speaking; and spontaneous activity such as fidgeting and drumming one's fingers during a dull lecture. In all these cases of action it is possible to be without any representation of what one is doing as one performs the action. Indeed, at times one is actually surprised when the action is accomplished, as when

[15] Heidegger, *Basic Problems*, p. 59.

one's thoughts are interrupted by one's arrival at the office. We should try to impress on ourselves what a huge amount of our lives—working, getting around, talking, eating, driving, etc.—is spent in this immediate coping mode, and what a small part is spent in the deliberate, purposeful, subject/object mode, which is, of course, the mode we tend to notice, and which has therefore formed our commonsense concepts and been studied in detail by philosophers.

From Aristotle's discussion of the practical syllogism to recent accounts of action such as Davidson's, philosophers have held that we must explain action as caused by the attempt to achieve some goal. According to Searle, even when there is no prior setting of a goal, as when I jump up and pace about the room, I must have in mind what I am doing. According to Heidegger, however, skillful coping does not require a mental representation of its goal at all. It can be *purposive* without the agent entertaining a *purpose*. Heidegger would like basketball player Larry Bird's description of the experience of the complex purposive act of passing the ball in the midst of a game:

> [A lot of the] things I do on the court are just reactions to situations. . . . A lot of times, I've passed the basketball and not realized I've passed it until a moment or so later.[16]

We can return to Merleau-Ponty's account of action to understand this experience. Remember the gestalt account of the experience of an expert tennis stroke. If one is expert at tennis and things are going well, what is experienced is one's arm going up and its being drawn to the appropriate position so as to complete the gestalt made up of the court, one's running opponent, and the oncoming ball. We not only feel that our motion was caused by the perceived conditions, but also that it was caused in such a way that it is constrained to

[16] Quoted in L.D. Levine, *Bird: The Making of an American Sports Legend* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1988).





reduce a sense of deviation from some satisfactory gestalt. Now we can add that *the nature of that satisfactory gestalt is in no way represented.*

To help convince us that the representation of the final gestalt need play no role in achieving the result, Merleau-Ponty uses the analogy of a soap bubble. The bubble starts as a deformed film. The bits of soap just respond to local forces according to laws which happen to work so as to dispose the entire system to end up as a sphere, but the spherical result does not play a causal role in producing the bubble. The same holds for the final gestalt of body and racket (although, unlike the bubble, the actor has a sense that he is cooperating in the movement and could stop it at will). Indeed, I cannot represent how I am turning my racket since I do not know what I do when I return the ball. I may once have been told to hold my racket perpendicular to the court, and I may have succeeded in doing so, but now experience has sculpted my swing to the situation in a far more subtle and appropriate way than I could have achieved as a beginner following this rule.

An even more striking case, where the goal the body is to achieve is not available to the actor as something to aim at, will make the point clear. Instructor pilots teach beginning pilots a rule for determining the order in which to scan their instruments—a rule the instructor pilots were taught and, as far as they know, still use. At one point, however, Air Force psychologists studied the eye movements of the instructors during simulated flight and found, to everyone's surprise, that the instructor pilots were not following the rule they were teaching; in fact, their eye movements varied from situation to situation and did not seem to follow any rule at all. The instructor pilots had no idea of the way they were scanning their instruments and so could not have represented to themselves what they were doing.

Searle's response to such objections is that only the broader action of winning a tennis point or finding out how everything is going by scanning the instruments is intentional, and it is this

goal that is represented in the intentional content of the intention in action. Searle points out that an expert skier does not have to form a separate intention to shift his weight from one ski to the other or to execute each turn. He just intends to ski down the mountain. This is a safe response since the intentionalist can, indeed, always find a level at which the actor is trying to achieve something, and the experience of acting can be defined as the experience of causing my body to bring about that end.

There is no doubt something right about this response, but something troubling about it too. The tennis player might well be trying to win a point, but what he or she is doing seems to be much more fine-grained. For example, expert tennis players learn to rush the net and slam the ball behind their opponent, and go on doing so whether they are aware of doing so or not. Of course, as Searle points out, they are also winning a point, winning the set, getting exercise, moving air molecules, using energy, etc. How do we determine what they are really doing? Searle has an answer which seems right: Ask the agent. He argues that there must be goal-awareness in action, since, if one is stopped and questioned even while acting in a nondeliberate way, one can say what one is doing. This, Searle concludes, shows that even in nondeliberate activity our movements are being guided by a self-referential intention in action which represents our goal. But the agent in our tennis example might well just say if asked that he was playing tennis. We could, of course, then restate our question, insisting that he tell us what he was doing *right then*. But then he might answer he was trying to win a point, or he might equally well say that he was rushing the net, or, like Larry Bird, he might say he was so absorbed he does not know what he was doing. The point is that if we are to trust what the agent says he is doing, as Searle says we should, what the agent is doing need not be the same as the conscious intention that initiated the flow of activity. So it seems we have no reason to deny that these are units of activity





that count as what the agent is doing but whose conditions of satisfaction are not represented by the agent.

Heidegger has an alternative account of our ability to say what we are doing, not based on the inspection of an internal mental state. Comportment is not simply an undifferentiated flow. One can make sense of it as having a direction and recognizable chunks—"toward-whichs" is Heidegger's nonintentionalistic term for these end-points we use in making sense of a flow of directed activity. For example, I leave home, drive to work, park, enter my office building, open my office door, enter my office, sit down at my desk, and begin working. These are all action segments defined by their toward-whichs. We thus make sense of our own comportment, and the comportment of others in terms of a directedness toward the sort of long-range and proximal ends that are sometimes our explicit goals. That is why, if asked what we or others are in the process of doing, we always have an answer. But this fact should not mislead us into postulating mental intentions in action. There is no evidence that our shared social segmentation of flows of activity into intelligible subunits is in the mind of the person who is absorbed in the activity. Heidegger notes explicitly that it is a mistake to think of the toward-which as the *goal* of the activity, i.e., as the condition of satisfaction the actor has in mind: "The awaiting of the 'towards-which' is neither a considering of the 'goal' nor an expectation of the impending finishing of the work to be produced."[17]

The phenomenon of purposive action without a purpose is not limited to bodily activity. It occurs in all areas of skillful coping, including intellectual coping. Many instances of apparently complex problem-solving which seem to implement a long-range strategy, as, for example, a masterful move in chess, may be best understood as direct responses to familiar perceptual gestalts. After years of seeing chess games unfold, a

[17] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 405.

chess grandmaster can, simply by responding to the patterns on the chess board, play master-level chess while his deliberate, analytic mind is absorbed in something else.[18] Such play, based as it is on previous attention to thousands of actual and book games, incorporates a tradition which determines the appropriate response to each situation and therefore makes possible long-range, strategic, purposive play without the player needing to have in mind any plan or purpose at all.[19]

Notice that explaining Heidegger's objections to Husserl and Searle I have had to speak of *activity* rather than *action*. Heidegger might well grant Husserl and Searle that their intentionalistic account reflects our commonsense concept of *action*. He is not, however, trying to explicate our commonsense concept, but to make a place for a sort of activity that has been overlooked both by common sense and *a fortiori* by the philosophical tradition. Indeed, Heidegger holds that the commonsense concept of action covers up our most basic mode of involvement in the world. He therefore introduces his own term, *Verhalten*, translated "comportment," for the way human beings normally cope. Heidegger uses "comportment" to refer to our directed activity, precisely because the term has no mentalistic overtones. But he claims that comportment, nonetheless, exhibits intentionality.

Husserlian intentionality is often called "aboutness," because mental content is directed toward an object under an aspect. Heidegger's more primordial intentionality is also appropriately called aboutness, but in this case it is not the *mind* which is thinking about something, but the *embodied person* going about

[18] For a full discussion of this phenomenon, see H. Dreyfus and S. Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine* (New York: Free Press, 1988).

[19] Pierre Bourdieu, influenced as he is by Merleau-Ponty, has seen the same phenomenon: "The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes *without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends*" (Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980], p. 53; my italics).





his or her business. This active aboutness, like the kind described by Husserl, is directed toward things under aspects. I can be transparently coping in such a way as to use my desk in order to write on, or to read at, or to keep things in. Thus, depending on what I am about, i.e. upon the "toward-which" of my activity, I reveal the desk under different aspects. So Heidegger can say: "*Comportments* have the structure of directing-oneself-toward, of being-directed-toward. . . . [P]henomenology calls this structure *intentionality*."[20] But, as we have seen, for Heidegger "comportment" denotes not merely acts of consciousness, but human activity in general. Thus, intentionality is attributed not to consciousness but to Dasein:

> Because the usual separation between a subject with its immanent sphere and an object with its transcendent sphere—because, in general, the distinction between an inner and an outer is constructive and continually gives occasion for further constructions, we shall in the future no longer speak of a subject, of a subjective sphere, but shall understand the being to whom intentional comportments belong as *Dasein*, and indeed in such a way that it is precisely with the aid of *intentional comportment*, properly understood, that we attempt to characterize suitably the being of Dasein.[21]

Heidegger's understanding of Dasein's comportment enables him to contrast his view with that of the tradition. He explains why in the tradition knowledge was mistakenly taken as basic, and why even action was interpreted as a kind of knowledge:

> The previous concept of intentionality proves to be a restricted conception . . . [B]ecause of this restriction, intentionality is conceived primarily as "taking as" [as meaning-giving]. . . . Thus every act of directing oneself toward something receives the characteristic of knowing, for example, in Husserl.[22]

The point is that for Husserl (and Follesdal and Searle too)

[20] Heidegger, *Basic Problems*, p. 58; first italics mine.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[22] Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundation*, p. 134.

intentionality always amounts to *my taking* something *as* something, taking it under some aspect. So whether I take what I am seeing as a house, or take what I am doing to be reaching for the salt, I am performing the same sort of mental act. One way to see this is to note that, according to Husserl and Searle, there must always be an ego doing the taking. I must represent to myself that my bodily movement is meant to bring about a specific state of affairs. The gestalt account of purposive action, however, shows that one can dispense with this active meaning-giving and still respond to the situation under one aspect or another. This is why Heidegger, Gurwitsch, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty each criticized Husserl's egological conception of consciousness.

Lest it appear that Heidegger's account of our everyday dealings, denying as it does a self-referential experience of acting, is committed to interpreting involved activity as zombie-like behavior, we can in summary see that skillful coping differs in at least three ways from mindless, mechanical behavior:

1. *Skillful coping is a mode of awareness.* Heidegger actually uses the term *experience (Erfahrung)*, but this experience can be characterized only as openness. It is not a mental, inner, private event (*Erlebnis*, Husserl's term), aware of itself as separate from, and directed toward, things in the world.

2. *Comportment is adaptable and copes with the situation in a variety of ways.* In ongoing coping one responds to things on the basis of vast past experience of what has happened in previous situations, or, more exactly, one's behavior manifests dispositions that have been shaped by a vast amount of previous dealings, so that in most cases when we exercise these dispositions everything works without interruption.

3. *If the going gets difficult we pay attention and so switch to deliberate subject/object intentionality.* One then has a sense of effort with the condition of satisfaction that my effort causes the appropriate goal-directed movements. Such representations certainly have a place in the overall explanation of how it





is that we manage to act in a wide range of situations. Indeed, when the situation is new or especially complex, manipulation of representations seems to be the primary way we have of carefully considering our options and orienting ourselves.

### *Being-in-the-World as Originary Intentionality*

Having argued so far that much of our everyday activity does not involve a mental state whose intentional content represents its conditions of satisfaction, but rather involves an open responsiveness to a gestalt, Heidegger next argues that all human activity, whether absorbed or deliberate, requires a background orienting that makes directed activity possible.

So far we have seen that in nondeliberate activities we experience ourselves only as an open responsiveness to what solicits our activity. Heidegger now adds that such unthinking activity provides the nonsalient *background*, both for specific acts of ongoing coping and for deliberately focusing on what is unusual or difficult. The basic idea is that for a particular person to be directed toward a particular piece of equipment, whether using it, perceiving it, or whatever, there must be a correlation between that person's general capacity for skillful coping and the interconnected equipmental whole in which the thing has a place. For example, when I enter a room I normally cope with whatever is there. What enables me to do this is not a set of beliefs about rooms, nor a rule for dealing with rooms in general and what they contain; it is a sense of how rooms normally behave, a skill for dealing with them, that I have developed by crawling and walking around many rooms. Such familiarity involves not only acting but also not acting. In dealing with rooms I am skilled at not coping with the dust, unless I am a janitor, and not paying attention to whether the windows are opened or closed, unless it is hot, in which case I know how to do what is appropriate. My competence for dealing with rooms determines both what I will cope with by using it, and what I

will cope with by ignoring it, while being ready to use it should the appropriate occasion arise.

Here Heidegger's account sounds deceptively similar to the appeal to the background introduced by Searle in his account of intentionality,[23] but in fact it is quite different. Searle, like Heidegger, holds that the background of intentionality involves "abilities," "capacities," and "practices," but he insists that these are not a kind of intentionality, but rather the nonintentional conditions that makes intentional action possible. For Heidegger, on the contrary, the sort of background familiarity that functions when I take in a room as a whole and deal with what is in it is neither a set of specific goal-directed actions nor merely a capacity that must be activated by a self-referential intentional state. Rather, what Heidegger calls *the background* consists in a continual intentional activity that he calls *ontological transcendence.*

In an early lecture, Heidegger describes this transcendence as "the background of ... . primary familiarity, which itself is not conscious and intended but is rather present in [an] unprominent way."[24] In *Being and Time* he speaks of "[T]hat familiarity in accordance with which Dasein . . . 'knows it way about' [*sich "auskennt"*] in its public environment."[25] In *Basic Problems* he calls it the "sight of practical *circumspection* . . . our practical everyday orientation." this familiarity has a crucial function:

> Circumspection oriented to the presence of what is of concern provides each setting-to-work, procuring, and performing with the way to work it out, the means to carry it out, the right occasion, and the appropriate time. This sight of circumspection is the skilled possibility of concerned discovering.[26]

On analogy with the ways our eyes are always accommodating

[23] See Searle, *Intentionality*, ch. 5.
[24] Martin Heidegger, *The History of the Concept of Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 189.
[25] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 405.
[26] Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 274.





to the light, we might call this background activity "accommodation." It is the way we are constantly adjusting to our situation. Heidegger has no specific term for this most basic activity. It is so pervasive and constant that he simply calls it being-in-the-world: "Being-in-the-world . . . amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in . . . an equipmental whole."[27]

In response, then, to Husserl and Searle, Heidegger points out that, whenever we are revealing entities by using or contemplating them, we must simultaneously be exercising a general skilled grasp of our circumstances. It is this background orienting that makes everyday coping possible. Thus even if we normally experienced acting as an effort directed toward achieving some goal (which Heidegger does not find in his normal coping experience) there would still be good reason to deny that goal-directed action was the only kind of intentional activity.

Just as in ordinary cases of coping, Dasein is absorbed in its activity in such a way that its experience does not have any self-referential intentional content, so, in general, Dasein is absorbed in the background coping that discloses the world as familiar in such a way that there is no separation between Dasein's disclosing comportment and the world disclosed. Heidegger tells us: "[W]e define [concerned being-in-the-world] as *absorption* in the world, being drawn in by it."[28]

> Self and world belong together in the single entity, Dasein. Self and world are not two entities, like subject and object . . . but self and world are the basic determination of Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world.[29]

[27] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 107.
[28] Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 196.
[29] Heidegger, *Basic Problems*, p. 297.

Or, even more directly, "Dasein . . . is nothing but . . . concerned absorption in the world."[30]

Our general background coping, our familiarity with the world, what Heidegger calls originary transcendence, turns out to be what Heidegger means by our understanding of being.

> That wherein Dasein already understands itself . . . is always something with which it is primordially familiar. This familiarity with the world . . . goes to make up Dasein's understanding of being.[31]

And Heidegger is explicit that this understanding of being is more basic than either practice or theory.

> In whatever way we conceive of knowing, it is . . . a comportment toward beings. . . . But all practical-technical commerce with beings is also a comportment toward beings. . . . In all comportment toward beings—whether it is specifically cognitive, which is most frequently called theoretical, or whether it is practical-technical—an understanding of being is already involved. For a being can be encountered by us *as* a being only in the light of the understanding of being.[32]

It is the discovery of the primacy of this understanding of being, not of the primacy of practical activity, that Heidegger rightly holds to be his unique contribution to Western philosophy.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 197.
[31] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 119.
[32] Heidegger, *Basic Problems*, p. 275.

* Some of the ideas in this paper were first expressed in Jerry Wakefield and Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Action and the First Person," in *John Searle and His Critics*, ed. E. Lepore and R. Van Gulick (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990).



**Geschlecht**
**sexual difference, ontological difference***

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to Ruben Berezdivin

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Of sex, one can readily remark, yes, Heidegger speaks as little as possible, perhaps he has never spoken of it. Perhaps he has never said anything, by that name or the names under which we recognize it, of the "sexual-relation," "sexual-difference," or indeed of "man-and-woman." That silence, therefore, is easily remarked. Which means that the remark is somewhat facile. A few indications, concluding with "everything happens as if . . . ," and it would be satisfied. The dossier could then be shut, avoiding trouble if not risk: it is as if, in reading Heidegger, there

*First and wholly preliminary part of an interpretation by which I wish to situate *Geschlecht* within Heidegger's path of thought. Within the path of his writings too, and the marked impression or inscription of the word *Geschlecht* will not be irrelevant. That word, I leave it here in its language for reasons that should become binding in the course of this very reading. And it is indeed a matter of "*Geschlecht*" (sex, race, family, generation, lineage, species, genre/genus) and not of *the Geschlecht*: one will not pass so easily toward the thing itself (the *Geschlecht*), beyond the mark of the word (*Geschlecht*) in which, much later, Heidegger will remark the "imprint" of a blow or a stamp (*Schlag*). This he will do in a text we shall not discuss here but toward which this reading will continue, by which in truth I know it is already magnetised: "Die Sprache im Gedicht, Eine Erörterung von Georg Trakls Gedicht" (1953) in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (1959, pp. 36 ff.).

were no sexual difference, nothing of that in man, or put otherwise in woman, to interrogate or suspect, nothing worthy of questioning, *fragwürdig*. It is as if, one might continue, sexual difference did not rise to the height of ontological difference, on the whole as negligible, in regard to the question of the sense of being, as any other difference, a determinate distinction or an ontic predicate. Negligible for thought, of course, even if not at all for science or philosophy. But insofar as it is opened up to the question of being, insofar as it has a relation to being, in that very reference, *Dasein* would not be sexed. Discourse on sexuality could then be abandoned to the sciences or philosophies of life, to anthropology, sociology, biology, or perhaps even to religion or morality.

Sexual difference, it was said, could not rise to the height of ontological difference. If one wished to find out what height is in question, the thought of difference not rising to any, the silence would not be lacking. That could then be found arrogant or, precisely, provoking, in a century when sexuality, common place of all babbling, has also become the currency of philosophic and scientific "knowledge," the inevitable *Kampfplatz* of ethics and politics. Not a word from Heidegger! It could even be found a matter of grand style, this scene of stubborn mutism at the very center of the conversation, in the uninterrupted and distracted buzzing of the colloquium; for in itself it has a waking and sobering value (but what exactly is one speaking about around this silence?): Who, indeed, around or even long before him has not chatted about sexuality as such, as it were, and by that name? All the philosophers in the tradition have done so, from Plato to Nietzsche, who for their part were irrepressible on the subject. Kant, Hegel, Husserl have all reserved it a place; they have tried at least a word on it in their anthropology or in their philosophy of nature, and really everywhere.

Is it imprudent to trust Heidegger's manifest silence? Will what is thus ascertained later be deranged from its pretty philological assurance by some known or unedited passage when, while searching out the whole of Heidegger, some reading machine will hunt out the thing and snare it? Still, one must think of programing the machine, one must think, think of it and know how to do it. Relying on which words? Only on names? And on which syntax, visible or invisible? Briefly, in which signs will you recognize his speaking or remaining silent about what you nonchalantly call sexual difference? What do you think by those words or through them?

In order that such an impressive silence be today remarked on, to let it appear as such, marked and marking, what, on the whole, would be satisfactory? Undoubtedly this: Heidegger would have said nothing about sexuality by name in the places where the best educated and





endowed "modernity" expected it with a firm foot, under its panoply of "everything-is-sexual-and-everything-is-political-and-reciprocally" (note in passing that the word "political" is of rare usage, perhaps null, in Heidegger, another not quite irrelevant matter). Even before a statistic were taken, the matter would seem already settled. But there are good grounds to believe that the statistic here would only confirm the verdict: about what we glibly call sexuality Heidegger has remained silent. Transitive and significant silence (he has silenced sex) which belongs, as he says, to a certain *Schweigen* ("*hier in der transitiven Bedeutung gesagt*"), to the path of a word [*parole*] he seems to interrupt. But what are the places of this interruption? Where is the silence working on that discourse? And what are the forms and determinable contours of that non-said?

You can bet on it, there's nothing immobile in the places where the arrows of the aforesaid panoply would assign the point named: omission, repression, denial, foreclosure, even the unthought.

But then, if the bet were lost, the trace of that silence would not merit detouring? He doesn't silence anything, no matter what, the trace does not come from no matter where. But why the bet? Because before predicting anything whatever about "sexuality," it may be verified, one must invoke chance, the aleatory, destiny.

Let it be, then, a so-called "modern" reading, an investigation armed with psychoanalysis, an enquiry authorized by complete anthropological culture. What does it seek? Where does it seek? Where may it deem to have the right to expect at least a sign, an allusion, elliptical as it may be, a reference, to sexuality, the sexual relation, to sexual difference? To begin with, in *Sein und Zeit*. Was not the existential analytic of *Dasein* near enough to a fundamental anthropology to have given rise to so many misunderstandings and mistakes regarding its pretended "*réalité-humaine*" or human reality as it was translated in France? Yet even in the analyses of being-in-the-world as being-with-others, or of care either in its self or as *Fürsorge*, it would be vain, it seems, to search even for the outline of a discourse on desire and sexuality. Hence the consequence could be drawn that sexual difference is not an essential trait, that it does not belong to the existential structure of *Dasein*. Being-there, being *there*, the *there* of being as such, bears no sexual mark. The same then goes for the reading of the sense of being, since, as *Sein und Zeit* clearly states (§2), *Dasein* remains in such a reading the exemplary being. Even were it admitted that all reference to sexuality isn't effaced or remains implied, this would only be to the degree that such a reference presupposes quite general structures (*In-der-Welt-sein als Mit- und Selbst-sein, Räumlichkeit, Rede, Sprache, Geworfenheit, Sorge, Zeitlichkeit, Sein*

*zum Tode*) among many others. Yet sexuality would never be the guiding thread for a privileged access to these structures.

There the matter seems settled, it might be said. And yet! *Und dennoch*! (Heidegger uses more often than one would fain believe this rhetorical turn: and yet, exclamation mark, next paragraph).

And yet the matter was so little or ill understood that Heidegger had to explicate himself right away. He was to do it in the margins of *Sein und Zeit*, if we may call marginal a course given at the University of Marburg/Lahn in the Summer Semester 1928.[1] There he recalls certain "directive principles" on "*the problem of transcendence and the problem of SEIN UND ZEIT*" (§ 10). The existential analytic of *Dasein* can only occur within the perspective of a fundamental ontology. That's why it is not a matter of an "anthropology" or an "ethic." Such an analytic is only "preparatory," while the "metaphysics of *Dasein*" is not yet "at the center" of the enterprise, clearly suggesting that it is nevertheless being programmed.

It is by the name of "*Dasein*" that I would here introduce the question of sexual difference.

Why name *Dasein* the being which constitutes the theme of this analytic? Why does *Dasein* give its "title" to this thematic? In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger had justified the choice of that "exemplary being" for the *reading* of the sense of being: "Upon which being should one read off the sense of being . . . ?" In the last instance, the response leads to the "modes of being of a determinate being, *that* being which we the questioners ourselves are." If the choice of that exemplary being, in its "privilege," becomes the object of a justification (whatever one think of it and whatever be its axiomatics), Heidegger on the other hand seems to proceed by decree, at least in that passage, when it becomes a matter of *naming* that exemplary being, of giving it once and for all its terminological title: "That being which we ourselves are and which includes questioning as one of its possibilities of Being |*die Seinsmöglichkeit des Fragens*|, we name being-there |we grasp it, arrest it, apprehend it 'terminologically,' *fassen wir terminologisch als Dasein*|." That "terminological" choice undoubtedly finds its profound justification in the whole enterprise and in the whole book by unfolding a *there* and a *being-there* which (nearly) no other pre-determination should be able to command. But that does not remove the decisive, brutal, and elliptical appearance from that preliminary proposition, that declaration of name. On the contrary, in the Marburg Course, the title of *Dasein*—its sense as well as its name—





can be found to be more patiently qualified, explained, evaluated. Now, the first trait that Heidegger underlines is its *neutrality*. First directive principle: "For the being which constitutes the theme of this analytic, the title 'man' (*Mensch*) has not been chosen, but the neutral title '*das Dasein*.' "

At first the concept of neutrality seems quite general. It is a matter of reducing or subtracting every anthropological, ethical or metaphysical predetermination by means of that neutralisation, so as to keep nothing but a relation to itself, bare relation, to the Being of its being; that is, a minimal relation to itself as relation to Being, that the being which we are, as questioning, holds with itself and its own proper essence. This relation to self is not a relation to an ego nor to an individual. Thus *Dasein* designates the being that "in a determined sense" is not "indifferent" to its own essence, or to whom its own Being is not indifferent. Neutrality, therefore, is first of all the neutralisation of everything not bearing the naked trait of this relation to itself, of this interest for its own Being (in the widest sense of the word "interest"). This implies an interest or a pre-comprehensive opening up for the sense of Being and for the questions thus ordained. And yet!

And yet the unfolding of this neutrality will be carried out with a leap, without transition and from the following item on (second directive principle) towards a sexual neutrality, and even towards a certain asexuality (*Geschlechtslosigkeit*) of being-there. The leap is surprising. If Heidegger wanted to offer examples of determinations to be left out of the analytic of *Dasein*, especially of anthropological traits to be neutralised, his only quandary would be which to choose. Yet he begins with and keeps himself limited to sexuality, more precisely to sexual difference. It therefore holds a privilege and seems to belong in the first place—to follow the statements in the logic of their enchaining |together|—to that "factual concretion" which the analytic of *Dasein* should begin by neutralising. If the neutrality of the title "*Dasein*" is essential, it is precisely because the interpretation of that being—which *we* are—is to be engaged *before* and *outside* of a concretion of that type. The first example of "concretion" would then be belonging to one or another of the two sexes. Heidegger doesn't doubt that they are two: "That neutrality means *also* |I underline — J.D.| that *Dasein* is neither of the two sexes |*keines von beiden Geschlechtern ist*|."

Much later, and at any rate thirty years later, the word "*Geschlecht*" will be charged with all its polysemic richness: sex, genre, family, stock, race, lineage, generation. Heidegger will retrace in language, by means of irreplaceable path-openings (that is, inaccessible to a current translation),

through labyrinthine, seductive and disquieting ways, the imprint of roads usually shut. Still shut, here, by the two. Two: that can not count anything but sexes, it seems, what are called sexes.

I've underlined the word "also" ("that neutrality means also . . . "). By its place in the logical and rhetorical chain, this "also" recalls that among the numerous meanings of that neutrality, Heidegger judges it necessary to begin not so much with sexual neutrality—which is why he also says "also"—yet, nevertheless, *immediately* with it *after the only* general meaning that has marked neutrality up to this point in the passage, to wit the *human* character, the title "*Mensch*" for the theme of the analytic. That is the only meaning which up till then he has excluded or neutralised. Hence a kind of precipitation or acceleration which can not be neutral or indifferent: among all the traits of man's humanity found thus neutralised with anthropology, ethics, or metaphysics, the first that the very word "neutrality" makes one think of, the first that Heidegger thinks of in any case, is sexuality. The incitement cannot be due merely to grammar, that's obvious. To pass from *Mensch*, indeed from *Mann*, to *Dasein*, is certainly to pass from the masculine to the neutral, while to think or to say *Dasein* and the *Da* of *Sein* from that transcendent which is *das Sein* ("*Sein ist das transcendens schlechthin*," *Sein und Zeit*, p. 28), is to pass into a certain neutrality. Furthermore, such neutrality has to do with the nongeneric and nonspecific character of Being: "Being as fundamental theme of philosophy is not a genre of a being (*keine Gattung*) . . . " (ibid.). But once again, if sexual difference can't exist without relation to saying, words, or language, still it can't be reduced to a grammar. Heidegger rather than describing it designates it as an existential structure of *Dasein*. But why does he all of a sudden insist with such haste? While in *Sein und Zeit* he had said nothing of it, asexuality (*Geschlechtslosigkeit*) figures here at the forefront of the traits mentioned when recalling *Dasein's* neutrality, or rather the neutrality of the title "*Dasein*." Why?

The first reason may be suspected. The very word *Neutralität* (*neuter*) induces a reference to binarity. If *Dasein* is neutral, and if it is not man (*Mensch*), the *first* consequence to draw is that it may not be submitted to the binary partition that one most spontaneously thinks of in such a case, to wit "sexual difference." If "being-there" does not mean "man" (*Mensch*), *a fortiori* it designates neither "man" nor "woman." But if the consequence is so near common-sense, why recall it? Above all, why should one go to so much trouble to get rid of a thing so clear and secure in the continuation of the Course? Should one indeed conclude that sexual difference doesn't depend so simply on whatever the analytic





can and should neutralise, metaphysics, ethics, and especially anthropology, or indeed any other domain of ontic knowing, for example biology or zoology? Should one suspect that sexual difference cannot be reduced to an ethical or anthropological theme?

Heidegger's precautionary insistence leaves one thinking, in any case, that here things are not a matter of course. Once anthropology (fundamental or not) has been neutralised and once it has been shown that it can't engage the question of being where it is engaged as such, once it has been observed that *Dasein* is reducible neither to human-being nor to the ego nor to consciousness and the unconscious nor to the subject or the individual, nor even to an *animal rationale*, one might conclude that the question of sexual difference doesn't have a chance of measuring up to the question of the sense of being or of the ontological difference, that even its very riddance wouldn't deserve privileged treatment. Yet incontestably it is the contrary that happens. Heidegger has just recalled *Dasein's* neutrality, and there he is right away trying to clarify: neutrality also as to sexual difference. Perhaps he was then responding to more or less explicit, naive or sophisticated, questions on the part of his hearers, readers, students, or colleagues, still held, aware or not, within anthropological space: What about the sexual life of your *Dasein*? they might have still asked. And after having answered the question on that terrain by disqualifying it, in sum after having recalled the asexuality of a being-there which is not an *anthropos*, Heidegger wishes to encounter another question, even perhaps a new objection. That's where the difficulties will grow.

Whether a matter of neutrality or asexuality (*Neutralität, Geschlechtslosigkeit*) the words accentuate strongly a negativity which manifestly runs counter to what Heidegger thereby wishes to mark out. It is not a matter of linguistic or grammatical signs at the surface of a meaning that remains for its part untouched here. By means of such manifestly negative predicates there should become legible what Heidegger doesn't hesitate to call a "positivity" (*Positivität*), a richness, and, in a heavily charged code, even a power (*Mächtigkeit*). Such precision suggests that the a-sexual neutrality does not desexualize, on the contrary; its *ontological* negativity is not unfolded with respect to *sexuality itself* (which it would instead liberate), but on its differential marks, or more strictly on *sexual duality*. There would be no *Geschlechtslosigkeit* except with respect to "two"; asexuality could be determined as such only to the degree that sexuality would mean immediately binarity or sexual division. "But such asexuality is not the indifference of an empty nothing (*die Indifferenz des leeren Nichtigen*), the feeble negativity of an

indifferent ontic nothing. In its neutrality, *Dasein* is not just anyone no matter who, but the originary positivity (*ursprüngliche Positivität*) and power of essence [*être*] (*Mächtigkeit des Wesens*)."

If *Dasein* as such belongs to neither of the two sexes, that doesn't mean that its being is deprived of sex. On the contrary, here one must think of a pre-differential, rather a pre-dual, sexuality—which doesn't necessarily mean unitary, homogeneous, or undifferentiated, as we shall later verify. Then, from that sexuality, more originary than the dyad, one may try to think to the bottom a "positivity" and a "power" that Heidegger is careful not to call sexual, fearing undoubtedly to reintroduce the binary logic that anthropology and metaphysics always assign to the concept of sexuality. Here indeed it is a matter of the positive and powerful source of every possible "sexuality." The *Geschlechtlosigkeit* would not be more negative than *aletheia*. One might recall what Heidegger said regarding the *Würdigung des "Positiven" im privativen Wesen der Aletheia* (in *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*).

From hence, the Course sketches a quite singular movement. It is very difficult to isolate in it the theme of sexual difference. I am tempted to interpret this as follows: by a kind of strange and quite necessary displacement, it is sexual division itself which leads to negativity, so neutralisation is *at once* the effect of this negativity and the effacement to which thought must subject it to allow an original positivity to become manifest. Far from constituting a positivity that the asexual neutrality of *Dasein* would annul, sexual binarity itself would be responsible, or rather would belong to a determination that is itself responsible, for this negativation. To radicalize or formalize too quickly the sense of this movement before retracing it more patiently, we could propose the following schema: it is sexual difference itself as binarity, it is the discriminative belonging to one or another sex, that destines or determines to a negativity that must then be explained. Going a bit further, sexual difference thus determined (one over two), negativity, and a certain "impotence" might be linked together. When returning to the originality of *Dasein*, of this *Dasein* said to be sexually neutral, "originary positivity" and "power" can be reconsidered. In other words, despite appearances, the asexuality and neutrality that should first of all be subtracted from the sexual binary mark, in the analytic of *Dasein*, are in truth on the same side, on the side of that sexual difference—the binary—to which one might have thought them simply opposed. Does this interpretation sound too violent?

The three following sub-paragraphs or items (§3, §4, §5), develop the motifs of neutrality, positivity and originary power, the originary itself, without explicit reference to sexual difference. "Power" becomes





that of an origin (*Ursprung, Urquell*), while elsewhere Heidegger will never directly associate the predicate "sexual" to the word "power," the first remaining all too easily associated with the whole system of sexual difference that may, without much risk of error, be said to be inseparable from every anthropology and every metaphysics. Moreover, the adjective "sexual" (*sexual, sexuell, geschlechtlich*) is never, at least to my knowledge, used, only the nouns *Geschlecht* or *Geschlechtlichkeit*, which is not without importance, these nouns being all the more capable of irradiating sense to other semantic zones. Later we will follow there some other paths of thought.

But without speaking of it directly, these three sub-paragraphs prepare the return to the thematic of *Geschlechtlichkeit*. They first of all efface all the negative signs attached to the word "neutrality." This word does not have the emptiness of an abstraction, neutrality rather leads back to the "power of the origin" which bears within itself the internal possibility of humanity in its concrete factuality. *Dasein*, in its neutrality, must not be confused with the existent. *Dasein* only exists in its factual concretion, to be sure, but this very existence has its originary source (*Urquell*) and internal possibility in *Dasein* as neutral. The analytic of this origin does not deal with the existent itself. Precisely because it precedes them, such an analytic cannot be confused with a philosophy of existence, with a wisdom (which could be established only within the "structure of metaphysics"), or with a prophesy that would teach such or such a "world view." It is therefore not at all a "philosophy of life." Which is to say that a discourse on sexuality which would be of this order (wisdom, knowledge, metaphysics, philosophy of life or of existence) falls short of every requirement of an analytic of *Dasein* in its very neutrality. Has a discourse on sexuality ever been presented not belonging to any of these registers? It must be noticed that sexuality is not named in that last paragraph nor in the one that will treat (we will return to it) a certain "isolation" of *Dasein*. It is named in a paragraph in *Vom Wesen des Grundes* (the same year, 1928) which develops the same argument. The word is found in quotation marks, as if incidentally. The logic of *a fortiori* raises its tone somewhat there. For in the end, if it is true that sexuality must be neutralised "with all the more reason" ("*a plus forte raison*"), as Henri Corbin's translation says, or *a fortiori, erst recht,* why insist? Where is the risk of misunderstanding? Unless the matter be decidedly not obvious, and there is still a risk of mixing up once more the question of sexual difference with that of Being and the ontological difference? In that context, it is a matter of determining the ipseity of *Dasein*, its *Selbstheit* or being-a-self. *Dasein* exists only for its own sake [*a dessein de soi*] (*umwillen seiner*), if one can put it thus, but that does not mean

either the for-itself of consciousness nor egoism nor solipsism. It is starting from *Selbstheit* that an alternative between "egoism" and "altruism" has a chance of arising and becoming manifest, as well as a difference between "being-I" and "being-you" (*Ichsein/Dusein*). Always presupposed, ipseity is therefore "neutral" with respect to being-me and being-you, "and with all the more reason with regard to 'sexuality' " (*und erst recht etwa gegen die "Geschlechtlichkeit" neutral*). The movement of this *a fortiori* is logically irreproachable on only one condition: It would be necessary that such "sexuality" (in quotation marks) be the assured predicate of whatever is made possible by or from ipseity, here for instance the structures of "me" and "you," yet as "sexuality" not belong to the structure of ipseity, and ipseity that would not as yet be determined as human being, me or you, conscious or unconscious subject, man or woman. Yet if Heidegger insists and underlines ("with all the more reason"), it is because a suspicion continues to weigh on him: What if "sexuality" already marked the most originary *Selbstheit*? If it were an ontological structure of ipseity? If the *Da* of *Dasein* were already "sexual"? What if sexual difference were already marked in the opening up of the question of the sense of Being and of the ontological difference? And what if, though not self-evident, neutralisation were already a violent operation? "With all the more reason" may hide a more feeble reason. In any case, the quotation marks always signal some kind of citing. The current usage of the word "sexuality" is "mentioned" rather than "used," one could say in the language of *speech act theory*; it is cited to be compared, warned about if not accused. Above all one must protect the analytic of *Dasein* from the risks of anthropology, psychoanalysis, even of biology. Still there perhaps remains some open door for other words, or another usage and another reading of the word "*Geschlecht*," if not of the word "sexuality." Perhaps another "sex," or rather another "*Geschlecht*," will come to be inscribed within ipseity, or will come to derange the order of all its derivations, for example that of a more originary *Selbstheit* making possible the emergence of the *ego* and of you. Let us leave this question suspended.

If this neutralisation is implied in every ontological analysis of *Dasein*, that does not mean that "the *Dasein* in man," as Heidegger often says, need be an "egoistic" singularity or an "individual ontically isolated." The point of departure within neutrality does not lead back to the isolation or insularity (*Isolierung*) of man, to his factual and existential solitude. And yet the point of departure within neutrality does indeed mean, Heidegger carefully observes, a certain original isolation of man: not, precisely, in the sense of factual existence, "as if the philosophising





being were the center of the world," but as the "*metaphysical isolation* of man." It is the analysis of this isolation which then raises again the theme of sexual difference and of the dual partition within *Geschlechtlichkeit*. At the center of this new analysis, the very subtle differentiation of a certain lexicon already signals translation problems which will only become aggravated for us. It will remain ever impossible to consider them as either accidental or secondary. At a certain moment we ourselves will be able to notice that the thought of *Geschlecht* and that of translation are essentially the same. Even here the lexical hive brings together (or swarms scattering) the series "dissociation," "distraction," "dissemination," "division," "dispersion." The *dis-* is supposed to translate, though only by means of transfers and displacements, the *zer-* of *Zerstreuung, Zerstreutheit, Zerstörung, Zersplitterung, Zerspaltung*. But an interior and supplementary frontier still partitions the lexicon: *dis-* and *zer-* often have a negative sense, yet sometimes also a neutral or non-negative sense (I would hesitate here to say positive or affirmative).

Let us attempt to read, translate and interpret more literally. *Dasein* in general hides, shelters in itself the internal possibility of a factual dispersion or dissemination (*faktische Zerstreuung*) in its own body (*Leiblichkeit*) and "thereby in sexuality" (*und damit in die Geschlechtlichkeit*). Every proper body of one's own [*corps propre*] is sexed, and there is no *Dasein* without its own body. But the chaining together proposed by Heidegger seems quite clear: the dispersing multiplicity is not primarily due to the sexuality of one's own body; it is its own body itself, the flesh, the *Leiblichkeit*, that draws *Dasein* originally into the dispersion and *in due course* [*par suite*] into sexual difference. This "in due course" (*damit*) insists through a few lines' interval, as if *Dasein* were supposed to have or be a priori (as its "interior possibility") a body found to be sexual, and affected by sexual division.

Here again, an insistence on Heidegger's part to observe that dispersion like neutrality (and all the meanings in *dis-* or *zer-*) should not be understood in a negative manner. The "metaphysical" neutrality of isolated man as *Dasein* is not an empty abstraction operating from or in the sense of the ontic, it is not a *neither-nor*, but rather what is properly concrete in the origin, the "not yet" of factual dissemination, of dissociation, of being dis-sociated or of factual dis-society: *faktische Zerstreutheit* here and not *Zerstreuung*. This being dissociated, unbound, or desocialized (for it goes together with the isolation of man as *Dasein*) is not a fall nor an accident nor a decline [*déchéance*] that has supervened. It is an originary structure affecting *Dasein* with the body, and *hence* with sexual difference, of multiplicity and lack-of-binding [*déliaison*], these two significations remaining distinct though gathered

together in the analyses of dissemination (*Zerstreuung* or *Zerstreutheit*). Assigned to a body, *Dasein* is separated in its facticity, subjected to dispersion and parcelling out (*zersplittert*), and thereby (*ineins damit*) always disjunct, in disaccord, split up, divided (*zwiespältig*) by sexuality toward a determinate sex (*in eine bestimmte Geschlechtlichkeit*). These words, undoubtedly, have at first a negative resonance: dispersion, parcelling out, division, dissociation, *Zersplitterung, Zerspaltung,* quite like *Zerstörung* (demolition, destruction), as Heidegger explains; this resonance is linked with negative concepts from an ontic point of view, immediately drawing forth a meaning of lesser value. "But something else is at issue here." What? Another meaning, marking the fold of a mani-fold multiplication. The characteristic sign (*Kennzeichnung*) by which such a multiplication can be recognized is legible to us in the isolation and factual singularity of *Dasein*. Heidegger distinguishes this multiplication (*Mannigfaltigung*) from a simple multiplicity (*Mannigfaltigkeit*), from diversity. The representation of a grand original being whose simplicity was suddenly dispersed (*zerspaltet*) into various singularities must also be avoided. It is rather a matter of elucidating the internal possibility of that multiplication for which *Dasein's* own body represents an "organising factor." The multiplicity in this case is not a simple formal plurality of determinations or of determinities (*Bestimmtheiten*), it belongs to Being itself. An "originary dissemination" (*ursprüngliche Streuung*) belongs already to the Being of *Dasein* in general, "according to its metaphysically neutral concept." This originary dissemination (*Streuung*) is from a fully determined point of view *dispersion* (*Zerstreuung*): difficulty of translation which forces me here to distinguish somewhat arbitrarily between dissemination and dispersion, in order to mark out by a convention the subtle trait which distinguishes *Streuung* from *Zerstreuung*. The latter is the determination of the former. It determines a structure of originary possibility, dissemination (*Streuung*), according to all the meanings of *Zerstreuung* (dissemination, dispersion, scattering, diffusion, dissipation, distraction). The word *Streuung* appears but once, it seems, to designate that originary possibility, that disseminality (if this be allowed). Afterwards, it is always *Zerstreuung*, which would add—but it isn't that simple—a mark of determination and negation, had not Heidegger warned us the previous instant of that value of negativity. Yet, even if not totally legitimate, it is hard to avoid a certain contamination by negativity, indeed with ethico-religious associations, that would seek to bind that dispersion to a fall and a corruption of the pure originary possibility (*Streuung*), which appears then to be affected by a supplementary turn. It will indeed be necessary to elucidate also the possibility or fatality of that contamination. We will return to this later.





Some indications of that dispersion (*Zerstreuung*). First of all, *Dasein* never relates to *an* object, to a sole object. If it does, it is always in the mode of abstraction or abstention from other beings which always co-appear at the same time. And this multiplication does not supervene because there is a plurality of objects; actually it is the converse that takes place. It is the originary disseminal structure, the dispersion of *Dasein*, that makes possible this multiplicity. And the same holds for *Dasein's* relation to itself: it is dispersed, conformably to the "structure of historicity in the widest sense," to the extent that *Dasein* occurs as *Erstreckung*, a word whose translation remains dangerous. The word "extension" could all too easily be associated with *extensio*, which *Sein und Zeit* interprets as the "fundamental ontological determination of the world" according to Descartes (§ 18). Here something else is at issue. *Erstreckung* names a spacing which, "before" the determination of space as *extensio*, comes to extend or stretch out being-there, the *there* of Being, *between* birth and death. Essential dimension of *Dasein*, the *Erstreckung* opens up the *between* that links it at once to its birth and to its death, the movement of suspense by which it *is tended* out and extended of itself *between* birth and death, these two receiving meaning only from that intervallic movement. *Dasein* affects itself, and that auto-affection belongs to the ontological structure of its historicity: "*DIE SPEZIFISCHE BEWEGTHEIT DES erstreckten Sicherstreckens NENNEN WIR DAS Geschehen DES DASEINS*" (§ 72). *Sein und Zeit* links together precisely this intervallic tension and dispersion (*Zerstreuung*) (notably in § 75, p. 390). *Between* birth and death, the spacing of the *between* marks at once the distance and the link, but the link according to a kind of distension. This "between-two" as rapport (*Bezug*) drawn into relationship (*trait*) with both birth and death belongs to the very Being of *Dasein*, "before" any biological determination, for instance ("*Im Sein des Daseins liegt schon das 'Zwischen' mit Bezug auf Geburt und Tod*," p. 374). The link thus enter-tained, held or drawn between |*entre-tenu, entre-tendu*|, over or through the dis-tance between |*entre*| birth and death, is itself entertained *with* dispersion, dissociation, unbinding (*Zerstreuung, Unzusammenhang*, etc. Cf. p. 390 for example). That link, that between, *could not take place* without them. Yet to take them as negative forces would be to precipitate the interpretation, for instance render it dialectical.

The *Erstreckung* is thus one of the determinate possibilities of essential dispersion (*Zerstreuung*). That "between" would be impossible without dispersion yet constitutes only one of its structural dependents, to wit temporality and historicity. Another dependent, another possibility—connected and essential—of originary dispersion: the originary spatiality of *Dasein*, its *Räumlichkeit*. The spatial or spacing dispersion is

manifested in language for instance. Every language is first of all determined by spatial significations (*Raumbedeutungen*).[2] The phenomenon of so-called spatialising metaphors is not at all accidental, nor within the reach of the rhetorical concept of "metaphor." It is not some exterior fatality. Its essential irreducibility can't be elucidated outside of this existential analytic of *Dasein*, of dispersion, historicity or spatiality. The consequences therefore must be drawn, in particular for the very language of the existential analytic: all the words Heidegger uses necessarily refer back to these *Raumbedeutungen*, beginning with the word *Zerstreuung* (dissemination, dispersion, distraction) which names the very origin of spacing at the moment when as language it submits to its law.

The "transcendental dispersion" (as Heidegger still names it) thus belongs to the essence of *Dasein* in its neutrality. "Metaphysical" essence, we are more precisely told in a Course presented above all at that time as a metaphysical ontology of *Dasein*, whose analytic constitutes only a phase, undoubtedly preliminary. This must be taken into account in order to situate what is here said about sexual difference in particular. Transcendental dispersion is the possibility of every dissociation and parcelling out (*Zersplitterung, Zerspaltung*) into factual existence. It is itself "founded" on that originary character of *Dasein* that Heidegger then called *Geworfenheit*. One should be patient with that word, subtracting it from so many usages, current interpretations or translations (for instance dereliction, being-thrown). This should be done foreseeing what the interpretation of sexual difference—which right away follows—retains in itself of that *Geworfenheit* and, "founded" on it, of transcendental dispersion. [There is] no dissemination that fails to assume such a "throw" [*jetée*], the *Da* of *Dasein* as thrown [*jetée*]. Thrown "before" all the modes of throwing [*jetée*] that will later determine it, project, subject, object, abject, trajectory, dejection; throw that *Dasein* can not make its own in a project, in the sense of *throwing itself* as a subject master of the throw. *Dasein* is *geworfen*: that means that before any project on its part it is thrown, but this being-thrown is not yet *submitted* to the alternative of activity or passivity, these [concepts] still too much in solidarity with the couple subject-object and hence with their opposition, one could even say with their objection. To interpret being-thrown as passivity could reinscribe it within the derivative problematic of subjecti(vi)ty (active or passive). What does "throw" mean before these syntaxes? And being-thrown even before the image of the fall, be it Platonic or Christian? There is a being-thrown of *Dasein* "before" there even appears—in other words, "before" there occurs for it there—any thought of throwing amounting to an operation, activity, or





an initiative. And that being-thrown of *Dasein* is not a throw *in* space, in what is already a spatial element. The originary spatiality of *Dasein* is drawn toward [or has to do with, *tient à*] the throw.

It is at this point that the theme of sexual difference may reappear. The disseminal throw of being-there (understood still in its neutrality) is particularly manifest in the fact that *Dasein* is *Mitsein* with *Dasein*. As always in this context, Heidegger's first gesture is to observe an order of implication: sexual difference, or belonging to a genre, must be elucidated starting from being-with, in other words, from the disseminal throw, and not inversely. Being-with does not arise from some factual connection, "it cannot be explained from some presumably originary generic being," by a being whose own body would be partitioned according to a sexual difference (*geschlechtlich gespaltenen leiblichen Wesen*). On the contrary, a certain generic drive of gathering together (*gattungshafte Zusammenstreben*), the union of genres (their unification, rapprochement, *Einigung*), has as "metaphysical presupposition" the dissemination of *Dasein* as such, *and thereby Mitsein*. The *Mit* of *Mitsein* is an existential, not a categorial, and the same holds for the adverbs of place (*Sein und Zeit*, § 26). What Heidegger calls here the fundamental metaphysical character of *Dasein* is not to be derived from any generic organisation or from a community of living beings as such.

How does this question of *order* matter to this "situation" of sexual difference? Thanks to a prudent derivation that in turn becomes problematic for us, Heidegger can at least reinscribe the theme of sexuality, in rigorous fashion, within an ontological questioning and an existential analytic. As soon as it is not placed upon a common *doxa* or a bio-anthropological science, the one and other sustained by some metaphysical pre-interpretation, sexual difference remains to be thought. But the price of that prudence? Is it not to remove sexuality from every originary structure? Deduce it? Or in any case derive it, confirming all the most traditional philosophemes, repeating them with the force of a new rigour? And that derivation, does it not begin by a neutralisation whose negativity was laboriously denied? And once the neutralisation is effected, does one still arrive at an ontological or "transcendental" dispersion, at that *Zerstreuung* whose negative value was so difficult to efface?

In this form these questions remain, undoubtedly, summary. But they couldn't be elaborated simply in an exchange with the passage in the Course of Marburg which names sexuality. Whether it be a matter of neutralisation, negativity, dispersion, or distraction (*Zerstreuung*), indispensable motifs here, following Heidegger, for posing the question of sexuality, it is necessary to *return* to *Sein und Zeit*. Although

sexuality is not there named, its motifs are treated in a more complex fashion, more differentiated, which does not mean, on the contrary, in an easier or more facile manner.

We must remain content here with several preliminary indications. Resembling in the Course a methodical procedure, neutralisation is not without link to what in *Sein und Zeit* is called the "privative interpretation" (§ 11). One could even speak of method, since Heidegger appeals to an ontology to be accomplished by or on the "way" of a privative interpretation. That way allows the "a priori's" to be extracted, while a note on the same page, crediting Husserl, says that it is well known that "a priorism is the method of every scientific philosophy which understands itself." This precisely in the context of psychology and biology. As sciences they are founded on an ontology of being-there. The mode of being of life is accessible, essentially, only through being-there. It is the ontology of life that requires a "privative interpretation": "life" being neither a pure *Vorhandensein* nor a *Dasein* (Heidegger says this without considering that the issue requires more than a mere affirmation: it seems to be obvious), it is accessible only by a negative operation of subtraction. It may then be asked what is the being of a life which is *nothing but* life, which is neither this nor that, neither *Vorhandensein* nor *Dasein*. Heidegger has never elaborated that ontology of life, but one can imagine all the difficulties it would have run into, since the "neither . . . nor" conditioning it excludes or overflows the most basic structural (categorial or existential) concepts of the whole existential analytic. It is the whole problematic that is here in question, the one that subjects positive knowings to regional ontologies, and these to a fundamental ontology, which itself at that time was preliminarily opened up by the existential analytic of *Dasein*. No chance (once more, one might say, and show) if it is the mode of being of the *living*, the animated (hence also of the psychical) which raises and situates that enormous problem, or in any case gives it its most recognisable name. This matter cannot be engaged here, but in underlining its all too often unnoticed necessity, it should at least be observed that the theme of sexual difference could not be dissociated from it.

Let us for the moment keep to that "way of privation," the expression picked up by Heidegger in § 12, and this time again to designate the a priori access to the ontological structure of the living. Once that remark is elaborated, Heidegger enlarges upon the question of those negative statements. Why do negative determinations impose themselves so often within this ontological characteristic? Not at all by "chance." It is because one must detach the originality of the phenomena from what has dissembled, disfigured, displaced or varnished them, from the *Verstellungen*





and *Verdeckungen*, from all those pre-interpretations whose negative effects should in their turn be annulled by the negative statements whose veritable "sense" is truly "positive." It is a schema that we have recognised before. The negativity of the "characteristic" is therefore not fortuitous any more than the necessity of alterations or dissemblances which it attempts in some manner *methodically* to correct. *Verstellungen* and *Verdeckungen* are necessary movements in the very history of Being and its interpretation. They can not be avoided like contingent faults; one may not reduce inauthenticity (*Uneigentlichkeit*) to a fault or sin into which one should not have fallen.

And yet. If Heidegger uses so easily the word "*negative*" when it is a matter of qualifying statements or a characteristic, he never does it, it seems to me (or, more prudently, much less often and much less easily), to qualify what, in pre-interpretations of Being, makes still necessary those methodical corrections of a negative or neutralising form. *Uneigentlichkeit*, the *Verstellungen* and the *Verdeckungen* are not in the order of negativity (the false or evil, error or sin). And one can well understand why Heidegger carefully avoids speaking in this case of negativity. He thus avoids religious, ethical, indeed even dialectical schemas, pretending to rise "higher" than they.

It should then be said that no negative signification is ontologically attached to the "neuter" in general, particularly not that transcendental dispersion (*Zerstreuung*) of *Dasein*. Thus, without speaking of negative value or of value in general (Heidegger's distrust for the value of value is well known), we should take account of the differential and hierarchical accent which regularly in *Sein und Zeit* comes to mark the neutral and dispersion. In certain contexts, dispersion marks the most general structure of *Dasein*. This we have seen in the Course, but it was already the case in *Sein und Zeit*, for example in § 12 (p. 56): "The *being-in-the-world* of *Dasein* is, with its factivity, always already dispersed (*zerstreut*) or even parcelled out (*zersplittert*) into determinate modes of *being-in*." Furthermore, Heidegger proposes a list of these modes and of their irreducible multiplicity. Yet elsewhere, dispersion and distraction (*Zerstreuung* in both senses) characterise the inauthentic ipseity of *Dasein*, that of *Man-selbst*, of that *One* which has been distinguished from ipseity (*Selbst*) as authentic and proper (*eigentlich*). As "anyone," *Dasein* is dispersed or distracted (*zerstreut*). The whole of that analysis is well known, we're only detaching that which concerns dispersion (cf. § 27), a concept one can again find at the center of the analysis of curiosity (*Neugier*, § 36). That, let us recall, is one of the three modes of falling (*Verfallen*) of *Dasein* in its everyday-being. Later we shall have to return to Heidegger's warnings: falling, alienation (*Entfremdung*),

and even downfall (*Absturz*) are not meant here as the theme of a "moralising critique," a "philosophy of culture," a dogmatic religious account of the fall (*Fall*) from an "original condition" (of which we have neither ontic experience nor ontological interpretation) or of a "corruption of human nature." Much later, we will have to recall these warnings and their problematic character, when within the "situation" of Trakl, Heidegger will interpret the decomposition and the dessentialisation (*Verwesung*), that is to say also a certain corruption, of the figure of man. It will still be a matter, even more explicitly this time, of a thought of "*Geschlecht*" or of *Geschlecht*. I put it in quotations because the issue touches as much on the name as on what it names; and it is here as imprudent to separate them as to translate them. We shall ascertain it, it is there a matter of the inscription of *Geschlecht* and of *Geschlecht* as inscription, stamp, and imprint.

Dispersion is thus marked *twice*, as general structure of *Dasein* and as mode of inauthenticity. One might say the same for the neutral: in the *Course*, while it is a question of *Dasein's* neutrality, no negative or pejorative index; yet "neutral," in *Sein und Zeit* may also be used to characterize the "one," to wit what becomes the "who" within everyday ipseity: then the "who" is the neutral (*Neutrum*), "*the one*" (§ 27).

This brief recourse to *Sein und Zeit* has perhaps allowed us better to understand the sense and necessity of that *order of implications* that Heidegger tends to preserve. Among other things, that order may also render an account of the predicates made use of by all discourse on sexuality. There is no properly sexual predicate; there is none at least that does not refer, for its sense, to the *general* structures of *Dasein*. So that to know what one speaks of, and how, when one names sexuality, one must indeed rely upon the very thing described in the analytic of *Dasein*. Inversely, if this be allowed, that disimplication allows the general sexuality or sexualisation of discourse to be understood: sexual connotations can only mark discourse, to the point of immersing it in them, to the extent that they are homogeneous to what every discourse implies, for example the topology of those "spatial meanings" (*Raumbedeutungen*) which are irreducible, but also all those other traits we have situated in passing. What would a "sexual" discourse or a discourse "on-sexuality" be without evoking farness [*eloignement*], an inside and an outside, dispersion and proximity, a here and a there, birth and death, a between-birth-and-death, a being-with and discourse?

This order of implications opens up thinking to a sexual difference that would not yet be sexual duality, difference as dual. As we have already observed, what the Course neutralized was less sexuality itself than the "generic" mark of sexual difference, belonging to one of *two* sexes.





Hence, in leading back to dispersion and multiplication (*Zerstreuung, Mannigfaltigung*), may one not begin to think a sexual difference (without negativity, let us clarify) not sealed by a two? Not two yet or no longer? But the "not yet" or "no longer" would still mean, already, some dialectical appropriation.

The withdrawal [*retrait*] of the dyad leads toward another sexual difference. It may also prepare other questions. For instance, this one: How is difference deposited among two? Or again, if one kept to consigning difference within dual opposition, how can multiplication be stopped in difference? Or in sexual difference?

In the Course, for the above given reasons, *Geschlecht* always names sexuality such as it is typed by *opposition* or by duality. Later (and sooner) matters will be different, and this opposition is called decomposition.

## NOTES

(1) *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz, Gesamt-Ausgabe*, Volume 26.
(2) Cf. also *Sein und Zeit*, p. 166.

# Existence and Self-Understanding in *Being and Time*

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Early in *Being and Time*[1] Heidegger announces that the primary concept by means of which he aims to understand Dasein (us humans) is the concept to which he gives the name 'existence.' But what is existence? Existence is, roughly, that feature of Dasein that its self-understanding is constitutive of its being what or who it is. In an important sense, this concept embodies Heidegger's existentialism. At the center of existentialism lies the claim that humans are given their content neither by an ahistorical, transcultural essence, nor by nature. Rather, Dasein itself determines this content in its act of self-understanding. Kierkegaard expressed this in his famous (if murky) formulation that "The self is that which relates itself to itself;" Ortega in his catchy phrase, "Man has no nature;" and Sartre in his notorious proposition, "*Existence* comes before *essence*."[2] All of these dicta articulate the same idea.

But how are we to understand this claim, and what must we presuppose to render it plausible? I shall argue for two hypotheses. First, we cannot render this existentialist idea plausible in its Heideggerian context without paying special attention to how it is linked in *Being and Time* to the concept of an ability. Heidegger interprets Dasein's characteristics primarily as ability-characteristics, that is, characteristics that are not states, but rather capacities. Second, the existentialist claim is subject to immediate and fatal counter-examples, unless we accept that Heidegger is operating with a subterranean form of dualism. It is not a Cartesian dualism of consciousness and matter; it is, rather, a dualism of natural and self-interpretive characteristics. We shall

1 All references to *Being and Time* are to the 15th German edition: Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (henceforth, *S&Z*). (Citations to all other sources will be in short title form, with complete bibliographic entries at the end of the paper.) All translations of *S&Z* are my own, although of course I have relied heavily on Macquarrie and Robinson's English translation: Heidegger, *Being and Time (B&T)*. I have tried to indicate most of my divergences from Macquarrie and Robinson's (M&R) translations of technical terminology, usually by giving the German in parentheses along with M&R's translation.

2 Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 13; Ortega y Gasset, "History as a System," p. 185; Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 26.

see, moreover, that these hypotheses, if true, and if linked with Heidegger's analysis of self-understanding, entail further unusual, ontological conclusions about Dasein.

*Existentiality, Self-Understanding, and Ability*

In §9 of *Being and Time*, whose aim is the preliminary presentation of "The Theme of the Analytic of Dasein" (the title of the section), Heidegger explains 'existence' thus: "*The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence.* ... All of this entity's being-so is primarily being," (*S&Z*, p. 42). Or as he puts it in a slightly different way, "this entity, in its being, comports itself to its being. ... It is *being* that is in each case at issue for this entity," (*S&Z*, pp. 41–42). He enlarges on this definition later, this time introducing the language of understanding: "Dasein is the entity that in its being comports itself understandingly to this being. The formal concept of existence is herewith indicated," (*S&Z*, pp. 52–53). Dasein is the entity whose being is always at issue in what it does, that is, the entity who always has an understanding of itself, and whose self-understanding is constitutive of its "being-so," its being what or who it is.

This central, existentialist thesis lies at the heart of Heidegger's conception of human being. Let us formulate it thus:

the *Existentiality Thesis*: If Dasein is *A*, then it is *A* because it understands itself as *A*.

To clarify this thesis, we must specify what Heidegger means by 'understanding.' To see the dangers of not doing so, consider a rather straightforward, or perhaps untutored, interpretation of the Existentiality Thesis, one based on the assumption that by 'understanding' Heidegger has in mind something like knowledge. In this case, the Existentiality Thesis would entail that Dasein knows about everything that it is (Cartesian transparency taken to an extreme!). This would render it impossible that Dasein have any features it does not know about and would probably make self-deception impossible (depending on one's analysis of that phenomenon).

Fortunately, we need not defend this claim, since Heidegger makes clear that by 'understanding' he does not have in mind some form of awareness or cognition:

> If we interpret [understanding] as a fundamental existentiale, we thereby indicate that this phenomenon is conceived as a fundamental mode of the *being* of Dasein. In contrast, 'understanding' in the sense of *one* possible sort of cognition among others, perhaps distinguished from 'explaining,' must thereby be interpreted as an existential derivative of primary understanding, which co-constitutes the being of the There. (*S&Z*, p. 143).



Rather, he uses the term to pick out competence, capability:[3]

> In ontical discourse we often use the expression 'to understand something' to mean 'to be able to manage a thing' [*»einer Sache vorstehen können«*], 'to be equal to it' [*»ihr gewachsen sein«*], 'to be capable of something' [*»etwas können«*]. In understanding, as an existentiale, that of which one is capable is not a What, but rather being as existing. (*S&Z*, p. 143)

In fact, the word 'understanding' has a number of closely related meanings. Principally, we use it in two ways: to describe a cognitive stance or propositional attitude towards a content, such as when we say, "I understand the Existentiality Thesis;" and to describe a sort of ability we have, as when we say, "I understand the Germans."[4] In the latter statement we express the idea not that we grasp some content (though understanding the Germans will likely involve that), but rather that we are competent with certain sorts of people, that we are capable of handling ourselves amongst them. (We can use the world 'know' this way too: "Bo knows baseball.")

Thus, in Heidegger's vocabulary, to say that Jones understands something is to say that she is capable of it. To say, therefore, that Jones understands herself as being (or, to be) *A*, is to say that she is capable of being A. And indeed, Heidegger endorses this consequence, when he writes, "*Understanding is the existential being of Dasein's own ability-to-be* [Seinkönnen, M&R: potentiality-for-being]," (*S&Z*, p. 144).[5] Thus, if we wed the Existentiality Thesis to Heidegger's account of understanding, we see that the former claims not that Dasein is aware of whatever it is, but rather that it is capable of whatever it is.

Now, this is a surprising claim. Suppose that Jones is six feet tall. The Existentiality Thesis then seems to claim that Jones is capable of being six feet tall. But what could that mean? Jones may *be* six feet tall, but is she *able* to be, or *capable*[6] of being, or *competent* at being six feet tall? Jones's height is one of her properties, not (cap)abilities. Jones is six feet tall, and is able to

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3 This interpretive thesis is prominent in the literature. See for example, Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*; Guignon, *Heidegger and Knowledge*; Schmitt, *Heidegger on Being Human*.

4 It may be that the first use is actually dependent on the second, if understanding a content is a sort of ability, perhaps an ability to use (a linguistic expression of) the content. It is not necessary to take a position on that question.

5 Richard Schmitt is the first to see that this line should be read this way. See Schmitt, *Heidegger on Being Human*, p. 179.

6 One must bear in mind that the words 'capable' and 'able' have at least two uses. On the one hand, we say that Jones is able to be hungry, by which we mean that she can be hungry, that it is possible that she be hungry. On the other hand, we often use 'able' and 'capable' in the sense in which they refer to an ability or competence. 'Jones is able to drive' almost always has this meaning. It states that she has a certain skill or competence. For the sake of clarity, *I will use 'ability' and 'capability' only in the latter sense.*

run ten miles per hour. Let us call these two sorts of item, respectively, 'state-characteristics' and 'ability-characteristics.' Heidegger claims, then, that all of Dasein's characteristics are ability-characteristics.

the *Ability Thesis*: All of Dasein's characteristics are ability-characteristics.

"But surely," one might object, "this Ability Thesis is indefensible: Jones has lots of state-characteristics, e.g., being six feet tall." To defend the Ability Thesis I shall argue, first, that the state-characteristic of being six feet tall is closely associated with a self-interpretive ability-characteristic, and second, that Dasein is only to be identified with the related ability-characteristic, not with the state-characteristic. Jones is six feet tall. She also, however, understands that physical state-characteristic in some definite way: she understands herself to be tall. This latter characteristic is not purely physical, is not the sort of characteristic a tree of the same physical height can have. At least, it can be seen to be so, when we recognize that being tall is a way of comporting oneself in the world. Being tall has in this way to do with one's stature, not just one's physical height. A person who understands herself as unusually tall might talk down to people, use her height to lord it over them; on the other hand, she might be embarrassed by her height, more shy about physical encounters. Similarly, although being a female is a biological fact about Jones, being feminine is her way of interpreting that biological fact. (Think of the way in which we speak of degrees of femininity and masculinity, and the way in which baby name books sometimes categorize baby names by how feminine or masculine they are.[7]) Thus, closely related to the state-characteristics of being six feet tall and female are the self-interpretive characteristics of being tall and feminine.

Self-interpretive characteristics are, furthermore, abilities. One must *know how* to be them. Being six feet tall or biologically female is a state, not an ability; it involves no know-how. But being tall (in the stature sense) or feminine is an ability. It is a way of handling oneself and relating to others. Abilities are easiest to notice when they break down. Imagine someone *bad* at being tall, say, someone who tries to lord it over others physically, but fails. He would seem rather foolish trying. He sets his shoulders back, cocks his head downward, and says ..., "Um, excuse me, please." Being tall is learned, sometimes mastered, and can be done better and worse. We are socialized into or are taught our self-interpretive stature-characteristics, just as with many other, more obviously self-interpretive characteristics (being American, being middle class, etc.). These characteristics are one and all abilities. Hence, each

[7] For an amusing version of this, look at the chapters "From Madonna to Meryl" and "From Rambo to Sylvester" in Linda Rosenkrantz and Pamela Redmond Satran, *Beyond Jennifer and Jason*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).



of the state-characteristics we have considered (being six feet tall, female) is closely associated with a self-interpretive ability-characteristic (being tall, feminine).

One might think that the force of the argument above depends on contrasting a *physical* state-characteristic with a *self-interpretive* ability-characteristic. But this is not so. Jones is not only six feet tall, but also, say, the leader of her weekly book discussion group. That is clearly self-interpretive: one is not the leader of a group naturally, but rather only by being socially and interpretively situated in a certain way. But is it a state-characteristic? Heidegger would argue not. Jones must *know how* to be a group leader; she must be capable of it. Being a group leader is having and exercising a set of abilities: the ability to organize a group's meeting, the ability to control a discussion, even the ability to use a phone. So, what appear to be interpretive *state*-characteristics turn out, in the final analysis, also to be *ability*-characteristics. Consequently, *none* of Dasein's interpretive characteristics are state-characteristics, and thus, the argument does not trade on narrowing our focus on state-characteristics to physical ones.

The second leg of the defense of the Ability Thesis is the more difficult one: the claim that Dasein is only to be identified with these self-interpretive characteristics, not with its factual state-characteristics. Since I have already argued that what appear to be self-interpretive state-characteristics are really ability-characteristics, I can now argue that Dasein is only its ability-characteristics by arguing that Dasein is only is its self-interpretive characteristics.

In the passage in which Heidegger draws the distinction between the factical (i.e., interpretive) and the factual (i.e., non-interpretive), we can see that Dasein's putative factual characteristics are not really proper to it .

> ... entities that are not worldless, e.g., Dasein itself, are also occurrent "in" the world, or more precisely stated, *can*, with a certain legitimacy and within certain limits, be *conceived* as merely occurrent. To do this, it is necessary to look completely away from, or better, not to see the existential make-up of being-in [Dasein's way of being in the world]. This possible conception of "Dasein" as something occurrent and only occurrent should not be confused with Dasein's *own* manner of "occurrentness." (*S&Z*, p. 55, note the scare-quotes)

Heidegger makes three significant claims here. (1) One can "with a certain legitimacy" conceive Dasein as something occurrent. In this context, the term 'occurrent' (*vorhanden*, M&R: present-at-hand) appears simply to pick out things unlike Dasein, that is, non-existential entities, including I think, what Heidegger calls the 'available' (*zuhanden*, M&R: ready-to-hand), that is, the paraphernalia of the social world.[8] So, one can "with a certain legitimacy"

[8] The term 'occurrent' has two senses in *S&Z*. In its narrow and more frequent sense, it means "to exist independently of human practices and interpretation," as opposed to "to be or to be dependent upon human practices." In this sense it contrasts with 'available,' which picks out those non-human things that play a role in our practices,

conceive Dasein as non-human, non-existential. (2) In doing this one must prescind from Dasein's "existential make-up." That is, one can conceive Jones factually, if one abstracts away from Jones's properly Daseinish, or existential features. This abstraction thus grasps a non-existential element or aspect of Jones, in the first instance, one would think, her biology. (3) This non-existential abstraction is not the same as Dasein's "proper occurrence," i.e., its facticity. 'Facticity' is the name that Heidegger gives to Dasein's determinacy as an existential entity.[9] Despite Heidegger's referring to it as "Dasein's *own* manner of 'occurrentness,'" or even, precisely by using 'occurrentness' here in scare-quotes, he wants to contrast it with whatever might be natural in Dasein. Let me formulate the overall claim of this paragraph in another thesis:

the *Duality Thesis*: Dasein can be considered both in its proper ontological make-up, as essentially self-understanding, and in an abstracted, factual way, as something that merely occurs (esp., naturally).

I want to suggest that this Duality Thesis is central to Heidegger's ontology. Of immediate relevance is this: only with the help of the Ability and Duality Theses can Heidegger maintain the Existentiality Thesis. The general strategy for responding to potential counter-examples to the Existentiality Thesis is to distinguish factual characteristics from the existential ability-characteristics that are interpretations of them. The three theses come together as a package deal in *Being and Time*.

We can clarify the Ability Thesis further by approaching it again from a slightly different angle. Let us begin with a deceptively direct comment by Heidegger early in *Being and Time*:

> The characteristics that can be exhibited by [Dasein] are thus not occurrent "properties" of an occurrent entity that "looks" such and so, but rather possible ways for [Dasein] in each case to be and only that. (*S&Z*, p. 42)

One might think this passage simply says that whatever Dasein is (its characteristics) are possible for it. But in fact, it has the Ability Thesis buried in it. If Heidegger intended here only to say that Dasein's characteristics are possibilities for it, then he would assert nothing so dramatic as the Ability Thesis.

paradigmatically, equipment. In its broad sense, 'occurrent' picks out non-human entities, i.e., both the occurrent in the narrow sense and the available. See *S&Z*, p. 45 for an example of a broad use of the term.

9 I do not have the space here to develop in detail an account of facticity. I aim in subsequent publications to clarify the conceptual relations between existentiality and facticity.



Of course, the weaker claim is a triviality dressed up as a thesis, since it just states that all of Dasein's (actual) characteristics are possible (characteristics). In order to see the passage as more than merely trivial, we must figure out what special content is carried by Heidegger's phrase, "possible ways for Dasein to be."

Heidegger suggests that there is a special notion of possibility that applies to Dasein, one quite unlike that which applies to, say, a tree.

> Possibility, which Dasein in each case is existentially, is distinguished just as much from empty, logical possibility as from the contingency of something occurrent, in so far as with the latter this and that can "happen." As a modal category of being-occurrent, possibility means the *not yet* actual and the *not ever* necessary. It characterizes the *merely* possible. ... Possibility as an existentiale, on the other hand, is the most originary and last, positive, ontological determination of Dasein ... . (*S&Z*, pp. 143–44)

Heidegger is here clearly trying to argue for a third sort of possibility other than logical possibility and the "contingency of something occurrent" (which I shall call 'occurrent possibility'). But what sort of possibility is that? To answer this question, it is helpful to examine his characterization of occurrent possibility.

Richard Schmitt is the only interpreter, so far as I know, who has addressed this passage directly.[10] Much of what he says is illuminating and helpful. Unfortunately, one aspect of his reading is clearly wrong. He interprets occurrent possibility as "physical possibility." But this is not right for two reasons. First, occurrent possibility is supposed to apply not only to the naturally and physically occurrent, but to any sort of occurrent item, whether it be physical, mental, mathematical, or whatever. Second, since Heidegger does not carve out any special notion for the available, I suggest that he is here using the term 'occurrent' in its broad sense to apply to anything unlike Dasein.[11] If so, "physical possibility" is yet more inappropriate, because not only is the available far from exclusively physical, but the possibilities that govern even the physically available are not primarily physical possibilities (e.g., how a hammer can be *used*).

Heidegger's explanation of the concept of occurrent possibility makes no mention of "physical possibility." He says simply, and unfortunately darkly, that occurrent possibility is the "contingency of the occurrent," and that "with the latter, this and that can happen." The idea seems to be this. Let me regiment the phraseology, 'with the latter, this and that can happen,' as 'with respect to something, some event can take place.' Consider the tree: with respect to the tree, a burning down can take place. Put somewhat more perspicuously, the tree can be the subject of a burning down. If this parsing of Hei-

10 Schmitt, *Heidegger on Being Human*, pp. 178ff.

11 See note #8 above.

degger's language is correct, then occurrent possibility is simply the contingent taking place of an event.

Now, Dasein's possibilities are, according to this passage, supposed to be different in kind. How? The rest of the paragraph in which this passage occurs focuses on Dasein's ability-to-be. This leads naturally to the suggestion—this is Schmitt's significant contribution—that Dasein's possibilities are abilities. We can say, "The tree can burn down," but we should not thereby mean, "The tree has the ability to burn down," at least not in the precise sense that the tree has some competence. But this is what it is to say of Jones that she can be a translator; it is to say that she is able to translate, that she has that competence.

Schmitt's reading of Heidegger's concept of existential possibility fits in neatly with the overall interpretation I am offering. Dasein's possibilities are abilities, and as Heidegger says on p. 42, all Dasein's characteristics are existential possibilities, i.e., abilities. Furthermore, the very idea of distinguishing two different sorts of possibility, occurrent and existential, reflects the Duality Thesis. We ought not, in a careful, ontological analysis, conflate the two different ways in which we can consider Dasein: abstractly as occurrent and properly as existential. This distinction runs so deep that we must even introduce distinct notions of *possibility* to do it justice. To reiterate: the Heideggerian defense of the Existentiality Thesis is carried out by way of the Ability and Duality Theses. We end up with a dualistic picture of Dasein, who when conceived properly is characterized only as having self-interpretive abilities, but when conceived improperly (abstractly) is also characterized as having state-characteristics.

*Understanding and Projection*

We have seen that for Dasein (properly) to be *A*, it must understand itself as *A*. Now, what is involved in understanding oneself as *A*? Heidegger answers this question by introducing his notion of projection (*Entwurf*). The German word '*Entwurf*' does not have all the meanings that the English word 'projection' has. Its central sense is that of a plan, sketch, or blueprint. However, Heidegger goes out of his way to indicate that by 'projection' he does *not* have in mind anything so explicit and thought out as a blueprint: "Projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a thought out plan, in accordance with which Dasein arranges its being," (*S&Z*, p. 145). So, what is Heidegger after with the language of 'projection?' He also plays upon the construction of the German word 'projection:' *ent-werfen* is to throw or cast forth.[12] He seems rather to want to emphasize this metaphor. Thus, at the beginning of the paragraph in which he introduces projection, he writes,

[12] See Caputo, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology."



> Why does understanding, in accordance with all essential dimensions of what can be disclosed in it, always press ahead into [*dringt ... in ...*] possibilities? Because understanding has in itself the existential structure that we call *projection*. (*S&Z*, p. 145)

We can see why Heidegger makes these claims, if we bear the Ability Thesis in mind.

Do we relate to our abilities as to thought out plans? Imagine that after finishing her college degree in German, Jones decides to become a simultaneous interpreter. She sketches out a plan for becoming one: she will go to Georgetown University's School of Languages and Linguistics to learn the craft and then apply for an apprenticeship at the United Nations. That is a plan for becoming a simultaneous interpreter, is it not? It is a plan for the *project of becoming* a simultaneous interpreter. It is not a plan for or blueprint of the *ability to be* a simultaneous interpreter. And note that being a simultaneous interpreter is an ability: one has to know how to be one. There is no sketch, plan, or blueprint for being this ability.[13] In understanding herself as a simultaneous interpreter, Jones does not sketch out a plan of the project of becoming one; rather, she works at and exercises the ability to be one. And this is what Heidegger means by "pressing ahead into" a possibility, an ability.

But there is a difficulty in developing the concept of projection.[14] When Heidegger introduces the language of projection, he makes two claims about its relation to Dasein's possibilities. First, he writes, "... in casting, projection casts the possibility as possibility before itself and lets it *be* as such," (*S&Z*, p. 145). So, projection constitutes possibility or "lets it be." Second, "Understanding is, as projection, the sort of being of Dasein, in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities," (*S&Z*, p. 145). Thus, in virtue of projection, Dasein *is* its possibilities. It would seem that these two statements stand in tension. On the one hand, projection seemingly has as its object all the possible ways in which Dasein could be. If this were so, then Jones—who now confronts a range of possible ways to be, including being a German doctoral student, being a simultaneous interpreter, being a commercial translator—thus projects all of these possibilities. After all, one would think, they are all possibilities for her, and it is projection that lets them *be*. On the other hand, it would seem that projection has as its object that (those) definite possibility(ies) for the sake of which Jones is now acting, her "for-the-sake(s)-of-which." Heidegger says that Jones *is* her possibilities.[15] She is the

[13] This is one of the principal burdens of Chs. 4–6 of Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*.

[14] I was first made aware of this difficulty by Ted Schatzki, who objected to my taking projection in just the narrow sense explored below.

[15] But why would Heidegger then use the plural 'possibilities' when describing this function of projection? Because Dasein is never just one for-the-sake-of-which, but rather several or many of them at once. Jones is a simultaneous interpreter, a loyal sister, a conscientious employee, etc.

possibility of being a simultaneous interpreter, because she is currently pressing ahead into that possibility. She is not the possibility of being a German doctoral student, because she is not currently pressing ahead into that one. She is her for-the-sake-of-which, and not the other possibilities that she forgoes. Thus, there are two functions here: opening up the range of possibilities, and pressing ahead into one of them; Heidegger seems to subsume both of them under the notion of projection.

There is good reason to believe, however, that 'projection' refers only to the second phenomenon, namely, determining oneself as someone by pressing ahead into a possible way to be. Recall that Heidegger explains why understanding always presses ahead into possibilities by pointing to projection:

> Why does understanding, in accordance with all essential dimensions of what can be disclosed in it, always press ahead into possibilities? Because understanding has in itself the existential structure that we call *projection*. (*S&Z*, p. 145)

Understanding presses ahead into possibilities, precisely because understanding is constituted by projection and projection just is pressing ahead into some possibility. Further support for this claim can be found in Chapter 2 of Division Two. In his treatment of what he calls "guilt," Heidegger briefly explores Dasein's inability to be two different possibilities at once. He writes,

> ... as able-to-be [*seinkönnend*], it [Dasein] stands in each case in the one possibility or the other; it is constantly *not* some other possibility and has given it up in its existentiell projection. (*S&Z*, p. 285)

If projection were the opening up of possibilities as possible, simply as such, then Dasein would not have to give up one possibility in virtue of projecting a different one. Since, however, in projecting the possibility of being a simultaneous interpreter, Jones presses ahead into that possibility, she must give up being a doctoral student. Though she could open up both possibilities, she cannot press ahead into both of them. Therefore, to project oneself upon some possibility is to press ahead into it.

But how is this conclusion consistent with Heidegger's claim that it is projection that lets possibilities *be*? After all, if Jones can only project herself upon one of the possibilities under consideration, then it would seem—if the preceding argument is correct—that the others are not possible for her. But that is a strange conclusion at best! The solution to this worry lies in recalling that Heidegger uses the term 'possibility,' when applied to Dasein, to refer to abilities, not simply to ways in which one could be. Although it is possible for Jones to be a doctoral student in German—she could pursue that way of life—she has not set out to do so, she has not developed any of the requisite skills, and she is not in any way pressing ahead into that possibility. Though she has the *potential* to be a doctoral student, she is not (currently) *able* to be one.[16]



*The Unattainability Thesis and Death*

Let us see where the argument thus far has gotten us. Suppose that Jones has some characteristic, *A*. We know (by the Ability Thesis) that *A* is an ability-characteristic. We also know (by the Existentiality Thesis) that Jones understands herself as *A*. Finally, because understanding is cashed out in terms of projection, that is, in terms of pressing ahead into *A*, we can see that Jones must be pressing ahead into *A*. This turns out to have a very surprising consequence, however.

Consider the following scenario. Jones sets out to develop the ability to ride a bike. She works at it for one year. At the end of this year, Jones is a skillful bike rider; she has the ability to ride a bike. Now, I take it that she would continue to be a skillful bike rider, at least for a year or so, even if she stopped riding her bike, say, three months later. Her ability to ride a bike will deteriorate slowly due to disuse. Nonetheless, it is correct to say that she still has the ability for a while after she decides never to exercise it again. We can conclude from this that there is some point at which it is true to say of Jones that she has the ability in such a way that she need no longer press ahead into it, although if she does not, she will gradually lose it. I shall henceforth use the words 'attain' and 'attainable' in a technical sense:

> *attainable*: An ability, *A*, is attainable just in case there can be some point in time at which it is true to say of a person that she has *A*, even if she never tries to exercise *A* thereafter.

Thus typically, abilities are attainable, because there is (or better, can be) some point at which one is able to exercise them, even if one never tries to do so again.

Nevertheless, Heidegger's account of Dasein's existentiality does not permit attainability. Recall that to be some ability-characteristic existentially, Dasein must press ahead into it. But attainability is precisely that feature of abilities that one can (come to) be able without having further to press ahead into them. In other words, Heidegger's account entails yet another thesis,

> the *Unattainability Thesis*: Dasein's ability-characteristics are not attainable.

[16] This contrast makes plain what is wrong with Macquarrie and Robinson's translation of '*Seinkönnen*' as 'potentiality-for-Being,' rather than as 'ability-to-be.'

But as we have seen with the example of riding a bike above, abilities do seem to be attainable. So, Heidegger's account appears to entail an unacceptable conclusion.

Here again the Duality Thesis underlies Heidegger's claim, for the Unattainability Thesis applies only to Dasein's self-interpretive abilities. That is to say, since it is self-interpretive abilities that belong properly to Dasein, whereas factual abilities belong to Dasein only as conceived as occurrent, the analysis of Dasein's existentiality applies only to Dasein's self-interpretive abilities. Jones can attain the ability to ride a bike, because she can work on her riding skills, develop them to the point where she can ride with ease, even after she decides never to ride again. This ability is occurrent, and Jones possesses it only in so far as she can be conceived occurrently .[17] But the ability to be, say, a weekend bike enthusiast is a self-understanding. (What we ordinarily call "the ability to ride a bike" is a mix of an occurrent ability to stay balanced and move forward on a contraption of a certain sort and a self-understanding.) Jones is characterized by the self-interpretive ability, Heidegger claims, only in so far as she is currently pressing ahead into it. If she were to give up on her hobby, she would thenceforth no longer be a weekend bike enthusiast.

We are, moreover, not dealing here simply with an inconsequential and remote repercussion of the arcana of Heidegger's ontology. The many theses I have drawn out of *Being and Time* do not constitute just the ontological infrastructure of Heidegger's existential analytic. They also make space for one of his more concrete and salient concepts, death. I have argued elsewhere[18] that 'death,' as Heidegger uses it, does not pick out the event that happens at the end of every human being's life. It denotes, rather, a certain condition in which one can find oneself, the condition of not being able to be anyone in particular. This inability, here characterized in terms of Dasein's existentiality, is the same phenomenon that Heidegger describes affectively in his discussion of anxiety. To be anxious is to find all ways to be Dasein equally irrelevant or uninteresting. Such an affective disposition would disable Dasein from being anyone, because Dasein would not have the affective grounds for exercising any particular ability-to-be.

What is relevant here is this: if one of Dasein's abilities-to-be were attained, Dasein could not then, and for a while thereafter, die in Heidegger's sense. Suppose that Jones could attain the ability-characteristic of being a simultaneous interpreter. If she attained it in February, then it would simply be false to describe her then as not able to be anyone: she would be able to be

[17] Recall the distinction (drawn above on p. 7) between 'occurrent' in the narrow sense, and 'occurrent' in the broad sense. The ability to ride a bike is occurrent in the broad sense, but not in the narrow. (It surely does depend upon human practices.)

[18] The interpretation of 'death' that I sketch here is unusual. I spell it out in greater detail and justify it at length in my article, "Concept of Death."



a simultaneous interpreter. This ability would be like the factual ability to ride a bike. Even if she renounced it, she would still be able to exercise it. So, no matter what affective condition she fell into in March, it would still be true that she is able to be a simultaneous interpreter. She could not die in March, in Heidegger's sense. But it is central to Heidegger's conception of Dasein's being that it can die, in this sense, at any time.

This last claim is foundational for much of what Heidegger says after Chapter 1 of Division Two, where he introduces and develops his concept of death. Without it, he cannot proceed to his distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity, since they are ways of responding to the possibility of death, and especially (in the case of authenticity) to its universal and constant possibility. Without the concept of death, he also cannot get his discussion of temporality off the ground.[19] In fact, the entirety of Division Two of *Being and Time* is dependent upon the legitimacy of Heidegger's concept of death. And I have been arguing that this concept would be idle without the Unattainability Thesis. Looking at the extended argument of *Being and Time* from the other end, we can see that Heidegger departs from the common existentialist pronouncement captured by the Existentiality Thesis, and this drives him to the Ability, Duality, and Unattainability Theses. This last in turn, then, leads him, *via* his concept of death, into his discussions of authenticity and temporality. All of the theses here explored contribute to Heidegger's ontology of the human, which we can now see to be a dualistic understanding of an entity constituted by its unattainable, self-interpretive ability-characteristics.[20]

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[19] Again, my own views lie partly in the background here, though on the general assertion many interpreters would agree. See Blattner, "Existential Temporality."

[20] I want to thank Terry Pinkard, Wayne Davis, and two anonymous referees for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper, and the Georgetown University Graduate School for a Summer Academic Research Grant for Summer, 1993, which I used to write this paper.

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# HEIDEGGER'S "AUTHENTICITY" REVISITED

**CHARLES B. GUIGNON**

In his recent book on Heidegger's concept of authenticity, *Eclipse of the Self*, Michael Zimmerman points out Heidegger's life-long attempt to link the theoretical-ontological questions of traditional philosophy with the personal-existential issues of everyday life.[1] The aim of grounding the "question of Being" in a deeper, more authentic way of being human is most strikingly evident in *Being and Time.* There the seemingly most abstract of all metaphysical questions—What is the meaning of Being?—is posed in terms of the most intensely personal question facing any individual—What is the meaning of human existence? To answer the former question appropriately, Heidegger claims, we must transform our approach to the latter. And this in turn requires a radical alteration in the quality of our lives. Despite Heidegger's insistence that his ontological findings have no evaluative import, the exhortative tone of the account of authenticity is unmistakable. He quotes with full approval Count Yorck's description of his own philosophy: "The practical aim of our standpoint is pedagogical in the broadest sense of the word" (p. 402).[2] Its goal is "to make possible the cultivation of individuality" (p. 403). Emerging out

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[1] *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1981).

[2] Page references in parentheses are to *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1972). I have generally followed the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), although revisions have been made where necessary. Toward the end of *Being and Time*, Heidegger cites the letters of Count Yorck from his correspondence with Wilhelm Dilthey. Dilthey had made the same claim about the practical ends of his philosophy: "The fruit and goal of all true philosophy is pedagogy in the broadest sense, the cultivation of man" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, 8: 7, quoted by Michael Ermarth in *Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981], p.35).

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of an age that perceived itself as a time of profound crisis, a period shaken by intellectual currents of relativism, scientific materialism, Darwinism, and the complete secularization of life, *Being and Time* attempts to combat the "groundlessness" (*Bodenlosigkeit*) of the contemporary world by uncovering enduring values and meanings within the framework of "worldliness" (*Weltlichkeit*) and human finitude. The "question of Being" is no exercise in arcane speculation; its aim is to restore a sense of the gravity and responsibility of existence by recovering a more profound grasp of what it is to be.[3]

Zimmerman's book provides a useful corrective to some popularized "existentialist" readings of the concept of authenticity as a matter of being "true to oneself," where this "self" is understood as consisting of "inner" feelings, needs, and drives. By characterizing *in*authenticity as "egoism," Zimmerman frees the notion of authenticity from its associations with self-preoccupation and reminds us of Heidegger's emphasis on involvement in the world as constitutive of the self.[4] But Zimmerman's central thesis that *Being and Time* is "subjectivistic," and that it presents a "voluntaristic-individualistic interpretation of authenticity"[5] as solely a matter of personal self-determination, seems one-sided and misleading, especially in the light of Heidegger's later claims that this work had overcome subjectivism.[6] By overlooking the program

[3] Heidegger's aim of "retrieving" a "more primordial" sense of human existence as teleological and as belonging to a wider social and historical context finds a parallel in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

[4] Nevertheless Zimmerman's claim that "it is natural for us to objectify ourselves since we live in a world of objects" (*Eclipse of the Self*, p. 47) betrays a deep confusion about the conception of worldhood in *Being and Time*. For Heidegger, we do *not* live in a world of objects; we live, for the most part, in a "ready-to-hand" context of equipmental relations organized into a web of means/ends relations. For the same reason it is wrong to say that our *everyday* self-understanding is egoistical or self-objectifying. Just as it is the case that an equipmental context can be encountered as a collection of brute objects (the "present-at-hand") only with the *breakdown* of Being-in-the-world, so the "self" can be encountered as an "ego" only when everydayness has collapsed.

[5] *Eclipse of the Self*, p. 199.

[6] For instance, in "The Letter on Humanism" which states that *Being and Time* "abandons subjectivity," and in "The Essence of Truth" according to which "every kind of anthropology and all subjectivity of man as subject is . . . left behind in that work" (both in D. F. Krell, ed.,





for *Being and Time* as a whole, *Eclipse of the Self* tends to trivialize the achievement of Heidegger's greatest work. Zimmerman's treatment of authenticity in *Being and Time* seems deficient in at least three important respects. First, it fails to account for the methodological role of the concept of authenticity in fundamental ontology. Second, it ignores an apparent inconsistency in Heidegger's account of authenticity which, when examined carefully, reveals the depth and complexity of the conception of human existence in *Being and Time*. And, third, it tends to treat the discussion of "authentic historicity" in an excessively subjectivistic way, and hence fails to show its integral place in the plan for the work as a whole.[7] I shall take up each of these interrelated issues in turn.

## I

The methodological role that the concept of authenticity plays in *Being and Time* will become apparent if we review the program of that work. Heidegger's explicit aim is to work out the "question of Being": that is, to develop a "science *of Being as such*" (p. 230) which will provide "a genealogy of the different possible ways of Being" (p. 11) and account for its "modes and derivatives" (p. 18). But such an inquiry remains "naive and opaque," we are told, if

*Basic Writings* [New York: Harper & Row, 1977], p. 207 and p. 141, respectively). Zimmerman's dismissal of Heidegger's own comments on his earlier works with the assertion that "Heidegger's self-interpretations must be taken with a grain of salt" (*Eclipse of the Self*, p. 77) seems slightly cavalier.

[7] That Zimmerman sees Heidegger's discussion of historicity and history at the end of the published part of *Being and Time* as extraneous to the project as a whole is revealed by his comment in an earlier essay: "It seems as if the entire analysis of Dasein's 'historicality' was only 'tacked on' to the end of *Being and Time* and seems not to have played a vital role in the articulation of the leading idea of the work itself" ("The Foundering of *Being and Time*," *Philosophy Today* 19 [Summer 1975]: 104). In *Eclipse of the Self*, the attempt to describe the relation between Dasein's temporality and the authentic historicity of a people is termed "ultimately unsatisfying" (p. xxiv) for reasons that are never made very clear. The discussion of history in *Being and Time* is found to be inadequate because it fails to account for the later concept of "the history of Being" as opposed to human history. In my opinion, however, the later talk of *Seinsgeschick* or "destiny of Being" only makes sense in terms of the important conception of history in the earlier work.

it fails to first consider "the *meaning* of Being in general" (p. 11; my emphasis). The investigation into the meaning of Being makes up the first stage of fundamental ontology. This investigation itself, however, requires a preliminary inquiry into the Being of the entity which *understands* what it means to be. The "fundamental question," Heidegger says, is "the problem of the internal possibility of the understanding of Being, from which all specific questions relative to Being arise."[8] Only if we have clarified the horizon in which Being is understood can we pose the question of Being in the proper way. Consequently *Being and Time* begins with an "existential analytic" which examines human existence or "Dasein" as the arena in which there is an understanding of Being. The goal is to find certain "essential structures" or "existentialia" that constitute Dasein by investigating the "existentiell" or specific instances of Dasein—ourselves.

The route to the question of Being therefore begins with a self-interpretation. But this approach raises the question of the proper mode of access to the entity being examined. Since fundamental ontology is supposed to lay a foundation for such regional sciences as biology and psychology, it cannot begin by taking over their assumptions about the nature of man. In particular, it must set aside the presuppositions of traditional epistemology which compress human existence into the status of a knowing subject collecting and processing "experiences." Moreover, Heidegger's critique of Cartesianism reveals that there can be no "immediate" self-knowledge arrived at through introspection or reflection. Our "direct" understanding of ourselves is always the product of a template of traditional schematizations which circulate as "common sense" in our culture, and tend to distort and disguise as much as they reveal. Since our way of interpreting ourselves and our world is mediated by social and historical categories and conceptualizations, our normal, "self-evident" self-interpretation is generally a *mis*interpretation.

In order to start from a neutral standpoint, then, the existential analytic begins by laying out our plain sense of what it is to be as this is found "proximally and for the most part" in everyday

[8] *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. J. S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 240. I have modified the translation to make it consistent with *Being and Time*.





active situations prior to reflection. Our normal, involved practical dealings in the world always embody a "*vague average understanding of Being*" (p. 5), Heidegger claims, and this "pre-ontological understanding of Being" can be described in order to develop a "preliminary" basis for interpreting Dasein. But insofar as this everyday pre-understanding is still infected by distortions conveyed to us by our social and historical context, it is necessary to engage in a deep interpretation of "everydayness" to reveal its underlying structure and content. Heidegger's use of the term "hermeneutics" for the method of the existential analytic indicates that he sees our ordinary self-understanding as a kind of text-analogue which can be interpreted to bring to light its hidden meaning.

In conceiving of Dasein's existence as like a text which is to be interpreted, however, Heidegger exposes the analysis of Dasein to the problem of the "hermeneutic circle." At the outset of *Being and Time* (sec. 2) he considers one version of this problem. It is generally agreed that a part of a text can only be understood in terms of some preliminary grasp of the whole. In order to understand a parable in the Gospels, for instance, I must understand it in terms of the Christian message of the New Testament. Similarly, Heidegger argues, in order to inquire into the Being of Dasein, I must have some preliminary grasp of what *Being in general* is, for otherwise how would I know it is that entity's *Being* I am discovering by the analysis and not something else? But since the meaning of Being in general was to be uncovered by first examining Dasein, there seems to be a circle: we can only identify the Being of Dasein if we have a prior grasp of Being in general, yet we can only determine the meaning of Being in general by working out the Being of Dasein.

Heidegger's solution to this problem is to begin with our vague average understanding of Being and use it as a "preliminary" and "tentative" horizon of understanding for inquiring into the Being of Dasein. On the basis of this first analytic of Dasein, it will then be necessary to revise our initial understanding of Being. This revision will then generate a new horizon of understanding of Being that will enable us to "repeat" the analytic of Dasein "on a higher and authentically ontological basis" (p. 17). But it is evident that this new analytic of Dasein will once again disclose a new horizon for understanding Being in general, and so on into a seemingly interminable spiral of back and forth movements

between the grasp of Being as a whole and the interpretation of the Being of Dasein. Our pre-understanding of Being assures us that we can initiate the inquiry. What is problematic here is how there can be a *closure* for the hermeneutic of Dasein. This problem is aggravated by Heidegger's claim that we are "constantly compelled to face the possibility of disclosing an even more primordial and universal horizon" at each stage (p. 26), so that the need may always arise for new repetitions. What is required, then, is some criterion that will determine when we have arrived at the *ultimate* horizon for understanding the meaning of Being.

The second version of the problem of the hermeneutic circle arises because of the need for a background of presuppositions in any interpretation. Every interpretation is mediated by a "fore-structure" of anticipations and assumptions about what is being interpreted. Since these presuppositions regulate the ways in which things can stand out for us, Heidegger says that there can be no such thing as a "presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us" (p. 150). Even when one is engaged in exact textual interpretation and wants "to appeal to what 'stands there' . . . one finds that what stands there in the first instance is nothing other than the obvious undiscussed assumption of the person who does the interpreting" (p. 150). There can be no direct encounter with "bare facts" or "things in themselves" independent of the prior assumptions projected by the understanding. It follows, then, that the interpretation of Dasein is regulated in advance by a "totality of 'presuppositions'" which is called the "*hermeneutical situation*" (p. 232). In the case of the existential analytic, what is presupposed is a "formal idea of existence" (p. 314). But the question arises of how we are to justify this initial presupposition. In section 63, Heidegger asks about the "evidence" for the correctness of his interpretation (p. 312). Since the analytic of Dasein has been "already illumined by the 'presupposed' idea of existence," he asks, "where does this idea get its justification?" (p. 313). What makes it "binding for everyone?" (p. 312). Starting from different presuppositions, one might have arrived at very different conclusions. The problem here, then, is how to provide a *confirmation* for the presuppositions that have guided the interpretation.

In the context of *Being and Time* it seems that the solution to the problems of closure and confirmation is to be found in the





notion of authenticity. Heidegger says that "truth which is primordial and authentic must guarantee the understanding of the Being of Dasein and of Being in general" (p. 316). When one has become authentic, one will achieve a "clearing away of concealments and obscurities" (p. 129) in order to become fully "transparent" about "the *truth of existence*" (p. 221). With respect to the *confirmation* of the presuppositions that make up the "hermeneutical situation," becoming authentic will enable us to justify the "formal idea of existence" that has guided the interpretation. When Dasein is authentic, it can "*decide for itself whether, as the entity it is, it has the composition of Being which has been disclosed in the projection of its formal aspects*" (p. 315; Heidegger's emphasis). With respect to the problem of the *closure* of the cycle of interpretations, Heidegger suggests that becoming authentic will also enable us to know when we have reached the "ultimate" horizon for understanding Being. We have arrived at the deepest horizon of understanding, according to Heidegger, when we have uncovered the primordial "sources," "wellsprings," "origins," and native "soil" of our everyday way of grasping what it is to be. As authentic, we will be able to peel off the hardened layers of "customary, traditional theories and opinions about Being" (p. 6) in order to recover "the soil [*Boden*] from which the basic ontological concepts grew" (p. 3). The aim is to demonstrate "the origin of our basic ontological concepts by an investigation in which their birth certificate is displayed" (p. 22), and this can be achieved only when we have become authentic.

Clarifying the methodological role of authenticity helps to explain why this notion is not merely normative in intent. But it also shows that there is a tremendous methodological burden placed on the concept of authenticity. If authenticity refers merely to decisiveness about one's "own specific possibilities," as Zimmerman asserts, then it will not be able to meet its methodological obligations.[9] For those specific possibilities are "existen-

[9] *Eclipse of the Self*, pp. 72 and 75. See also p. 61: "the resolute individual is always open to a particular group of possibilities: his own"; and p. 75: "an individual must relinquish the numerous self-interpretations offered by the 'they' [i.e., *das Man*]." Because of this emphasis on individual willfulness and self-determination, cut off from any social responsibility, Zimmerman can say that "Heidegger tends to interpret authenticity in a romantic way: the self-willed individual struggling

tiell" and, as we shall see later, drawn from the range of self-interpretations made accessible in the public world, so that relating to them, even with the "transparency" of resoluteness, does not seem to promise the kind of ontological "content" needed to ground fundamental ontology. And without such a content, it seems that Heidegger's project of developing a "science of Being" will have to be scuttled. In the interpretation of authenticity that follows, then, it will be necessary to keep this methodological desideratum in mind.

## II

There are a number of inconsistencies in *Being and Time* which must be handled by opting for one line of interpretation rather than another. For example, Heidegger generally speaks of two "modes" of Dasein's way of being—authenticity and inauthenticity—but on at least one occasion he mentions an "undifferentiated mode," suggesting that there might be three. There is also some uncertainty as to whether "everydayness," our essential involvement in day-to-day preoccupations, is necessarily inauthentic or not. Zimmerman deals with these inconsistencies by concluding that the undifferentiated mode of everydayness is "neutral," while authenticity and inauthenticity involve deliberate choices as to how one will live.[10] But, surprisingly in a book devoted to the concept of authenticity, he fails to consider what appears to be one of the most glaring inconsistencies in *Being and Time*—one which, when analyzed, lights up the richness of Heidegger's view of being human.[11]

mightily to break free from conventional values *so he can achieve his own possibilities*" (p. 96; my emphasis). No clue is given as to what an individual's "own possibilities" might be.

[10] *Eclipse of the Self*, pp. 44ff. It should be noted, however, that there is a great deal of textual evidence *against* this line of interpretation. Heidegger's statement that "Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence—in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself" (p. 12) suggests that there are really only two possibilities, as does the confusingly translated passage on p. 68 of the English edition: "And because Dasein is in each case essentially its own possibility, it can, in its Being, 'choose' itself and win itself; it can [also] lose itself, i.e., never win itself and only 'seem' to do so" (p. 42).

[11] To the best of my knowledge this inconsistency has only been discussed in detail by Joan Stambaugh in "An Inquiry into Authenticity





The inconsistency arises in the following way. In the early stages of the description of Dasein in its "average everydayness," Heidegger points out Dasein's tendency to conformism. In our everyday affairs, we tend to handle equipment in standardized ways and drift into the socially approved slots laid out in the public world. We act as anyone does. The "I" of everyday agency is not something unique, Heidegger tells us; it is "*das Man*," the anonymous "one" or the "Anyone." Our temptation to fall in with the crowd is the basis for the well-known indictment of the Anyone in *Being and Time*. But at the end of his critique Heidegger says that being the Anyone is not just an error that could be avoided. On the contrary, the Anyone is an existentiale or essential facet of Dasein's Being, and it "*belongs to Dasein's positive constitution*" (p. 129). For this reason Heidegger claims that authenticity is only an "existentiell mode" of our essential way of being *as the Anyone:*

> Authentic Being-one's-self [*eigentliche Selbstsein*] does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the Anyone; *it is rather an existentiell modification of the Anyone—of the Anyone as an essential existentiale.* (p. 130)

The priority of the Anyone is reemphasized later in the text: "Authentic Being-one's-self takes the definite form of an existentiell modification of the Anyone . . ." (p. 267). But Heidegger seems to reverse this order of priorities elsewhere when he suggests that it is *authenticity* that is prior, and that being an Anyone is an "existentiell mode." He states that

> proximally and for the most part Dasein is *not* itself but is lost in the Anyone-self [*Man-selbst*], which is an existentiell modification of the Authentic self [*eigentlichen Selbst*]. (p. 317)

As a result we find that "inauthenticity is based on the possibility of authenticity" (p. 259).

Is this an outright contradiction? Not necessarily. A close reading of these passages reveals that a distinction is being made between the "Authentic self" and the "Anyone" as *existentialia*,

and Inauthenticity in *Being and Time*," *Research in Phenomenology* 7 (1977): 153–61. Whereas she says that her aim is that of "at least softening that contradiction" (p. 154), I will argue that there is no contradiction.

on the one hand, and "authentic *Being-one's-self*" and the "Anyone-*self*" as *existentiell modifications*, on the other. If we are to resolve the apparent contradiction, then, we must show how Dasein is simultaneously *both* an "Authentic self" *and* the "Anyone." Only then will it be clear in what sense authentic Being-one's-self and inauthentic being an Anyone-self are existentiell modes of Dasein's essential being.

The dual nature of Dasein as both an Authentic self and the Anyone comes to light in Heidegger's characterization of being human. One of the central goals of *Being and Time* is to describe Dasein in such a way as to bypass the traditional conception of man as a "substance" or "thing," whether psychic, physical, or "personal." In order to capture the dynamic nature of life, Heidegger begins by portraying Dasein's Being as a "happening" or "event" (*Geschehen*) extending "from birth to death." Just as the Being of an event is defined in terms of its outcome (i.e., "what happened"), so the Being of Dasein is defined in terms of the achievement of its life as a whole. I can only *be* an atheist all my life, for example, if I do not fall prey to any last-minute conversions. If I succumb to my family's entreaties and repent on my deathbed, the description "life-long atheist" is no longer true of me. For humans, "Being" is a success verb: it is an accomplishment that is realized in one's "Being-a-whole." But Heidegger notes that it seems paradoxical to say that I can only *be* something when I am no longer, that is, when my life is finished. He therefore defines Dasein's "Being-a-whole" as "Being-*toward*-the-end" or "Being-*toward*-death," characterizing this as a way of living in relation to one's end. Each of us, whether we realize it or not, *will be* complete at some point, and what we *are* is determined by our stance toward that final realization.

The characterization of Dasein as the "happening" of a life as a whole provides the basis for the "formal" determination of the self as a "movement" (*Bewegung*) along a "temporal" axis.[12] What is definitive of "the formal existential totality of Dasein's ontological structural whole" (p. 192), according to Heidegger, is that is has a certain "Being-relation" to itself. Dasein is unique among entities in that, "in its Being, it has a Being-relation to

[12] Strictly speaking it is not movement *along* a temporal axis, but the movement that is constituted by "temporality temporalizing itself."





this Being" (p. 12). In order to understand this definition of Dasein as a "self-relation," we must see that Dasein is characterized as having two aspects which are called "essence" and "existence."[13] Regarded as "essence," Dasein is "thrown" (*geworfen*) into the task of living which it must take up in some way or other. We find ourselves as an "ability-to-be" (*Seinkönnen*), and our lives stand before us as something we have "to be" (*zu sein*). It belongs to Dasein's "essence" that "in each case it has its Being as its own *to be*" (p. 12; my emphasis). We find ourselves "*already-in*" a specific cultural and historical context which provides us with the determinate range of possibilities that shape our "facticity." Seen as passive, Dasein is always "not yet" something: "there is always something still outstanding which, as an ability-to-be of Dasein itself, has not yet become 'actual'" (p. 236).

Regarded as "existence," however, Dasein is already "*ahead-of-itself*." To be human is to be underway in the enterprise of living, to be "projecting" (*entwerfen*) oneself toward the realization of one's life as a whole. Heidegger characterizes human existence as essentially *teleological*: in each of our actions we express goals which point outward to some sense of our lives as a final, definitive configuration of meaning. When I accept life's minor irritations with equanimity or when I explode in rage, I make a commitment, whether consciously or not, concerning my overview of what my life amounts to as a totality—concerning what sort of person I am. Because our lives matter to us—because who we are is "at issue" or "at stake" for us—we always take some stand on specific roles and self-interpretations in living out our lives. This "Being-a-whole," which is the ultimate goal of life, is called "existence": Heidegger says that "the Being itself toward which Dasein can comport itself, and always does comport itself somehow, we call '*existence*'" (p. 12). Dasein is always already "beyond itself" in taking a stand on its life. As a projection towards its culmination, Dasein is defined as a "self-projective Being toward its ownmost ability-to-be" (p. 191).

The Being of Dasein is determined by the way it relates itself to the task of living by taking a concrete stand on its life as a

[13] I am indebted to Ernst Tugendhat's *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1970) for my account of the "formal" definition of Dasein.

whole. The "Being-relation" that is definitive of Dasein only works itself out in the specific possibilities one takes over in the enterprise of living. This is why Heidegger says that "*the 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence*" (p. 42). Since *who* and *what* I am is defined by the actual roles I take over in making choices for my life, my Being is defined by the goal-directedness with which I take up pregiven possibilities in dealing with the current situation. This structure of Dasein as a thrown projection that is engaged in the world makes up the formal definition of "care," and its "ontological meaning" is found in the "temporalizing" (literally: "bringing to fruition") of temporality. Because each of us is solely responsible for what his or her life adds up to "in the end," Heidegger says that Dasein is "in each case mine" (p. 42). No one can fill in for me in the project of making something of my life as a totality.

The "formal" structure of Dasein's existence as a temporal "happening" is the "Authentic self." It is important to realize that this temporal structure of thrown goal-directedness is the "essential structure" of all instances of Dasein, whether they live authentically or not. We are all "Being-toward-the-end" in the dual sense of facing our possible extinction and of having this finitude as something we alone can bring to realization. Each of us is unique to the extent that our lives *will* have a final pattern and *can* have a pattern that is coherent and integrated. Heidegger says that

> only insofar as [Dasein] is in its essence something which *can be* authentic—that is, something of its own—can it have lost itself and not yet won itself. As *modes* of Being, *authenticity* and *inauthenticity* are both grounded in the fact that Dasein in general is characterized by mineness. (pp. 42–43)[14]

Only because Dasein *is* an Authentic self and *does* take a stand on its life can it flee from itself and live in an inauthentic mode.

The temporal axis of Dasein's Being as a purposive thrust toward self-completion is intersected at every point by an axis of involvement in the world. Dasein is essentially "Being-in-the-world" and as such is unavoidably caught up in mundane tasks and routines. In our everyday lives we are generally occupied

[14] My emphasis on "can be" and "modes."





with contexts of equipment in trying to realize practical goals. The ways we handle the tools we find around us and the ways we conduct our lives are regulated by norms and conventions made accessible in the social world into which we are thrown. Only because we have been initiated into a shared "we-world" can we handle ourselves in coherent, normalized ways. But this means that all of the possible roles and self-interpretations we can take over have been laid out in advance by the Anyone. Since we *are* what we make of ourselves in taking over possibilities from the public world, the possibilities of the Anyone define us without residue. As the Anyone, we are "place-holders" in a nexus of roles, offices, vocations, and status relations opened up in the cultural context in which we find ourselves. Heidegger says that our Being in everydayness is "representable" or "delegatable": "anyone" could fill our places because those places are the Anyone's.

If the Anyone is an "essential existentiale" of Dasein, authenticity cannot be a matter of "transcending the herd" in any sense. Rather, authenticity must be understood as an "existentiell modification" of our essential being as *both* the Anyone and an Authentic self. To be authentic is to be resolute about one's ability to live one's life as a coherent totality, but Heidegger points out that "even resolutions remain dependent upon the Anyone and its world" (p. 299). The "transparency" of authenticity reveals that resolute existence cannot be disengaged from the public world:

> In resoluteness the issue for Dasein is its ownmost ability-to-be which, as something thrown, can project itself only upon definite factical possibilities. Resolution does not withdraw itself from "actuality," but discovers first what is factically possible; and it does so by seizing upon it in whatever way is possible for its ownmost ability-to-be *in the Anyone*. (p. 299; my emphasis)

There can be no exit from the Anyone to discover my "own" possibilities precisely because the Anyone is the source of all possibilities, both authentic and inauthentic. Lacking such a coherent structuring of public possibilities, humans would be not so much "knights of faith" or "overmen" as utterly diffuse bundles of raw capacities, captives to every momentary caprice, without any basis for direction or choice.

If the Anyone is the locus of all our possibilities and is definitive of what it is to be a self, what motivates Heidegger's critique of its way of life? It is clear that what Heidegger is

attacking is not the role of the Anyone in constituting concrete possibilities, but the way it tempts us into the unthinking conformism of being an inauthentic "Anyone-self." By maintaining an established order and insisting on the paramount importance of falling into step with all its latest fads and trends, the Anyone levels down our possibilities and keeps us from facing up to our unique responsibility for our lives. We tend to be dissipated and rootless, skidding from one diversion to another, throwing ourselves into the busy-ness of everyday tasks, and we thereby forget our ownmost possibility of Being-toward-death. But whether one is dispersed and uncentered as an inauthentic Anyone-self or integrated and coherent as authentic Being-one's-self, the actual possibilities one takes up for one's life are drawn from the public range of interpretations of the Anyone. It would appear, then, that authenticity is not so much a matter of the "content" of a life as it is of the "style" with which one lives. The distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity seems to hinge not on *what* one is in the sense of what specific possibilities one takes up, but rather of *how* one lives.

## III

To say that Dasein is essentially the Anyone, then, is to say that all of its possible ways of understanding itself and its world are drawn from the social context into which it is enculturated. No possibility is uniquely my own except my "ownmost" possibility of articulating the social roles I take over into a configuration of meaning for my life as a whole. But it seems that if authenticity refers solely to the "style" of a life, then the concept will not be able to fulfill its methodological role of providing a foundation for fundamental ontology. For if all possibilities of understanding are drawn from the Anyone, and if the Anyone's understanding of what it is to be is shot through with misinterpretations and misunderstandings, then there appears to be no way in which becoming authentic can provide us with a deeper grasp of the meaning of Being. In order to see how authenticity offers us a more primordial understanding of what it is to be, then, we must expand our interpretation to embrace Heidegger's account of "authentic historicity."





At the beginning of the fifth chapter of the second division of *Being and Time* there is a marked shift of emphasis in the analysis of Dasein. Heidegger now tells us that "the orientation of our analytic has so far remained 'one-sided'" (p. 373) in its concentration on Dasein's futurity as Being-toward-death. What is needed is "a more radical approach to the existential analytic" which will embrace the origins of Dasein's happening—its "Being-toward-the-beginning"—and will account for the "connectedness of life" as a whole (pp. 372-73). The characterization of "authentic historicity" is supposed to fill out the account of the "authentic happening (*Geschehen*) of Dasein" (p. 382) by exposing the "sources" of its ways of being and clarifying its possibility of living with continuity and integrity as a unified self.

Heidegger begins the account of historicity by inquiring into the origins of Dasein's ways of interpreting itself. The possibility that these could be drawn from one's stance towards death is explicitly ruled out: "those possibilities of existence which have been factically disclosed are not to be gathered from death" (p. 383). What then is the source of our factical possibilities? The answer remains the same as before: the Anyone. Dasein "understands itself in terms of those possibilities of existence which 'circulate' in the 'average' public way of interpreting Dasein today" (p. 383). But it is now evident that authentic Dasein appropriates the possibilities floating in the "today" in a unique way. In resoluteness, Heidegger says, Dasein "discloses current factical possibilities of authentic existing as *from the heritage* [*aus dem Erbe*]" (p. 383). In other words, the concrete "content" of Dasein's understanding of itself and its world consists in the public possibilities of the Anyone—but taken over *as a "heritage."*

The concept of a "heritage" is introduced in contrast to what Heidegger calls the "tradition." We saw above that our everyday sense of what it is to be is preshaped by a grid of categories and concepts made accessible in the social world. In Heidegger's view, this social pre-understanding is handed down to us by history. To say that "Dasein 'is' its past" (p. 20) is to say that its concrete projects and goals are always appropriated from its historical culture and are always projected along the guide rails that have been laid out by the past. The Anyone is the bearer and medium of these historical possibilities. But the current social world generally conveys this framework of understanding to us in the

warped and distorted form of a "tradition." The tradition dominates our understanding, according to Heidegger, "in such a way that what it 'transmits' is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed" (p. 21). Tradition "blocks our access to those primordial 'wellsprings' ['*Quellen*'] from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn" (p. 21). Caught in the "self-evidence" of traditional ways of understanding, we have forgotten the "origins," "roots," and "soil" from which our possibilities have emerged.

When Heidegger claims that authentic Dasein can appropriate its possibilities as a "heritage," then, he means that Dasein can break through the crust of tradition in order to get in touch with the most primordial ways of understanding in its history. These possibilities of understanding are always present within the interpretations circulating in the public world, but they are usually disguised and concealed. In becoming authentic, Heidegger suggests, Dasein recovers the deeper undercurrents of historical meanings that course beneath the fads and fancies of the "today" and takes them over as the fundamental resources for its own being. As authentically historical, Dasein exists as "fate" (*Schicksal*): in its resolute, "simplified" projection onto death, it takes over the most basic possibilities it has inherited from history and appropriates them as its own. But Heidegger observes that since Dasein is always contextualized in a community—since the happening of its life always dovetails into the "world-historical happening" of a people—its "authentic happening" is possible only as a "co-happening" with its community. This "co-happening" Heidegger calls Dasein's "destiny" (*Geschick*): "Our fates have already been guided in advance in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for determinate possibilities" (p. 384).

On this view, then, our deepest possibilities of understanding are drawn from the shared historical possibilities made accessible in our culture. My own personal quest for meaning is only possible against the backdrop of the communal projection of meaning of a historical people. This indebtedness to history may not be explicit: Heidegger says that "it is not necessary that in resoluteness one should *explicitly* know the origin of the possibilities upon which that resoluteness projects itself" (p. 385). In other words, a grasp





of the heritage *as historical* is not necessary to resoluteness. But when authentic Dasein *does* have an explicit understanding of its basic possibilities as historical, then authenticity takes the form of a "retrieval" or "repetition" (*Wiederholung*) of the possibilities that have come before. Understanding itself as implicated in the same historical destiny as its forebears, Dasein recognizes its obligation to take over the possibilities of the "Dasein who has been there" in taking a stand on the shared sending of its people. Authentic Dasein follows in the footsteps of "the sole authority a free existing can have . . . the repeatable possibilities of existence" (p. 391).

Far from being "subjectivistic" or "individualistic," then, the vision of authenticity in *Being and Time* points toward a communal sense of responsibility for realizing goals implicit at the dawn of Western history. Authentic existence has a determinate "content" for its understanding because it has penetrated the traditional interpretation of its current world in order to retrieve the enduring ideals and aims of its "heritage." Even the project of posing the question of Being is understood as indebted to the past. Since any human activity is dependent on and made possible by history, it follows that the activity of engaging in fundamental ontology is also historical. It draws its findings not from some transcendental, ahistorical source, but from the work of its predecessors. Hence Heidegger says,

> From the ownmost ontological meaning of inquiry itself as historical, it follows that the working out of the question of Being has the assignment of inquiring into the history of that inquiry itself—that is, of undertaking a historical study—in order to bring itself into the positive appropriation of the past, into the full possession of its own most proper possibilities of inquiry. (pp. 20–21)

The inquiry into the meaning of Being has the "assignment" of appropriating the history of ontology precisely because it understands itself as a *product* of that history.

The account of authentic historicity clarifies the way in which becoming authentic enables us to determine the *confirmation* and *closure* of fundamental ontology. The presuppositions that guide the hermeneutic of Dasein are confirmed when they are found to be consonant with the most primordial ways of understanding Being that have been "retrieved" from our heritage. This retrieval, which breaks through the concealments of the tradition in order

to demonstrate the "birth certificates" of our basic ontological concepts, was supposed to have been accomplished in the unpublished second part of *Being and Time*, the "phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality as our clue" (p. 39).[15] When we have recovered the deepest understanding of Being in our history, we will also have determined the closure for fundamental ontology. Because the historical investigation provides the bedrock for the question of Being, Heidegger says that "the question of Being does not achieve its true concreteness until we have carried through the process of destroying the ontological tradition" (p. 26).

Zimmerman's *Eclipse of the Self* focuses primarily on Heidegger's attempt to identify temporality as the underlying structure of human existence, a project partly inspired by Kant, and in so doing it tends to highlight the more individualistic conception of Dasein that appears in division two of *Being and Time*. As I have tried to show, however, this limited perspective conceals the fact that, for Heidegger, temporality is always bound up with the concrete history of an ongoing culture. Zimmerman's account therefore tends to distort Heidegger's early conception of being human. When the historical dimension of *Being and Time* is overlooked, it is natural to see the concept of authenticity as referring to a life encapsulated in a shell of personal commitments without concrete content. Authenticity then appears as a version of what Philip Rieff calls "a way of using all commitments, which amounts to loyalty to none."[16]

More importantly, Zimmerman's reading of *Being and Time* also tends to obscure the continuity between Heidegger's early writings, such transitional works as the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and his later writings. Zimmerman is quite right in interpreting the "turn" in Heidegger's thought as a shift from his early anthropocentrism to the later "anti-humanist" notion of "the history of Being." But he is unable to account for the fact that, throughout Heidegger's writings, this history remains *our* history,

[15] I have discussed the relation of the two parts of *Being and Time* in my essay, "The Twofold Task: Heidegger's Foundational Historicism," in Michael Zimmerman, ed., *The Thought of Martin Heidegger*, *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* 32 (1984).

[16] *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 21.





and not that of, say, India or China. The "history of Being," starting with the Greeks and proceeding through the stages of Western thought, is a history which makes a claim on us and defines us because our relation to it is one of what Gadamer calls "belongingness." It can make a claim on us precisely because it speaks to us in the concrete language of a "heritage." If we are to understand Heidegger's later vision of an authentic relation to the history of Being, I would suggest, we need to see it in the light of the earlier account of authentic historicity as the retrieval and appropriation of those enduring meanings laid out in our history. When the concept of authenticity is severed from the concrete historical context in which it makes sense, it is in danger of lapsing back into the same amorphous, crypto-religious concerns with well-being and self-fulfillment that Zimmerman has so effectively criticized.

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# Individual and Community in Early Heidegger: Situating *das Man*, the *Man*-self, and Self-ownership in Dasein's Ontological Structure

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In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger claims that (1) *das Man* is an 'existential' i.e. a necessary feature of Dasein's Being; and (2) Dasein need not always exist in the mode of the *Man*-self, but can also be *eigentlich*, which I translate as 'self-owningly'. These apparently contradictory statements have prompted a debate between Hubert Dreyfus, who recommends abandoning (2), and Frederick Olafson, who favors jettisoning (1). I offer an interpretation of the structure of Dasein's Being compatible with both (1) and (2), thus resolving the Dreyfus–Olafson debate. Central to this resolution is the distinction between *das Man* and the *Man*-self. *Das Man* is one of three existential 'horizons', or fields of possibilities; the other two horizons are the world and death. At any time, Dasein encounters entities in one of two basic modes: either by 'expressly seizing' possibilities of the horizon, or by occluding these possibilities. These modes are 'existentiell', i.e. features of Dasein's Being that are possible, but not essential. Self-ownership and the *Man*-self are the two basic existentiell modes of being oneself, i.e. projecting everyday possibilities of oneself appropriated from the horizon of *das Man*. What differentiates these two modes is the stance one takes to the possibility of death, the existential horizon of being oneself.

## I. Introduction

Contemporary philosophy is witnessing a resurgence of the question, classically addressed in such texts as Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, about the relation between the individual and society. What is decidedly new about the ways in which this question is dealt with today is that it figures centrally not just in discussions of ethics or political philosophy, but in philosophy of mind and language as well. One central question that recurs in these debates is this: must someone be in some sense a member of a human community, trained in its practices and beholden to its norms, in order to have a 'self'?

Although Martin Heidegger's thought was not originally addressed in terms of these questions, there have been several recent efforts[1] to turn to Heidegger as a fruitful source of insight into these issues. These studies have

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rightly focused on Heidegger's claim in *Sein und Zeit*[2] roughly, that our 'intentional' encounters with things in some way take place in terms of what we can call, to employ a visual metaphor, an essentially social 'horizon'; Heidegger's term for the social horizon of human life is '*das Man*'. This term is a neologism formed by turning '*man*' – the German third-person pronoun equivalent to the formal English 'one' and to informal English uses of 'they', or even 'you' – into a neuter noun. In German, '*man*' is used to express such normative statements as '*One* ought not behave that way in public', or such reports of common beliefs as '*They* say he's a great singer'. '*Das Man*' has accordingly been translated in a number of ways, each with its advantages and disadvantages.[3] In order to avoid the latter, and to keep at bay as many preconceptions as possible, I will leave the term '*das Man*' untranslated.

It is clear that *das Man* plays a crucial role in *SZ*. Heidegger devotes a three-section chapter to it (*SZ* 113–30), and mentions it repeatedly throughout the work, especially in his discussion of 'everydayness' and 'falling' (*SZ* 166–80). It is also clear that *das Man* has something to do with sociality and an individual's conformity to social norms. Beyond this, however, little is immediately obvious from the texts.

The obscurities in Heidegger's discussion of *das Man* have given rise to two extreme interpretations. These positions are represented by two prominent California Heidegger scholars: Frederick Olafson and Hubert Dreyfus.[4] Both fully recognize that their interpretations do not cohere fully with the texts, and both blame this lack of coherence on Heidegger. Roughly, Dreyfus conceives of *das Man* as the set of shared background practices of a community. Along with the skills and habits that allow us, as essentially embodied, social, and acculturated beings, to participate in these practices, *das Man* constitutes *the* fundamental source of meaning, including the meanings in terms of which one understands oneself. For example, Dreyfus writes: '*all* significance and intelligibility is the product of the one [i.e. of *das Man*]'. And he attributes to Heidegger the view that *das Man* is the 'ultimate reality', i.e. 'the end of the line of explanations of intelligibility'.[5] For Dreyfus, this presents major difficulties for Heidegger's concept of self-ownership,[6] in which Dasein (on Dreyfus's reading) is somehow supposed to transcend *das Man*. Accordingly, Dreyfus characterizes Heidegger's account of self-ownership as 'incoherent', 'confused', and 'incomprehensible'.[7] Olafson, on the other hand, takes Heidegger's talk of *das Man* as cultural criticism of the 'ubiquitous anonymity' of modern life and mass society.[8] Despite its importance in Dasein's Being, *das Man* can for Olafson nevertheless be overcome in rare moments of self-ownership. Since he reads the denial that all meaning derives from *das Man* as built into Heidegger's position from the beginning, Olafson sees no particular problem with Heidegger's account of self-ownership. Instead, he sees difficulties arising





from what he regards as Heidegger's treatment of *das Man* as a 'hypostatized entity'.[9]

In this paper, I propose to set the record straight over the nature and status of *das Man*. My strategy for doing so will be to some extent indirect. Most of the paper will be concerned with providing an understanding of the background required for situating these issues in their proper context: the structure of Dasein's Being. I argue that Dasein's Being can be understood to have three 'perspectives' – roughly, three basic ways of encountering entities. Each perspective has a corresponding 'horizon', i.e. roughly, a set of possibilities in terms of which entities are encountered in the corresponding way. Both the perspectives and their respective horizons are 'existentials', i.e. essential structures of Dasein's Being. As such, no Dasein can ever be without them as long as it exists. As I will argue, Dasein must at any time 'enact' (*vollziehen*) each of these horizonal-perspectival pairs in one of two mutually exclusive 'existentiell'[10] modes, i.e. ways that are possible, although not necessary. Like all existentiell characteristics, the particular mode in which Dasein enacts a given horizonal-perspectival pair is not dictated exclusively by Dasein's existential structure. Although these existentiell modes are made possible by the existential horizonal-perspectival correlates, the existentiell mode in which Dasein at a given time enacts any of these correlates is a possibility, but not a necessity. Section III includes a diagram in English depicting the overall structure of Dasein's Being. (An otherwise identical diagram in German is included as an Appendix.) The reader may find it helpful to refer to this diagram from time to time, in order to see how the individual phenomena I discuss fit into this structure.

The way of understanding Dasein's Being that I suggest here will allow us to identify a distinction that appears to have gone unnoticed in the Dreyfus–Olafson debate. On the one hand, *das Man* is an existen*tial*: namely, the overarching network of interdependent possible ways for others to be, and also the 'reservoir' from which an individual appropriates her own everyday ways to be. On the other hand, the *Man*-self is an existen*tiell* mode of enactment of the perspective of 'Being-oneself': namely the mode that Heidegger calls 'unownedness', 'everydayness', or 'falling'. Besides the *Man*-self, the other primary existentiell mode of Being-oneself is self-ownership (*Eigentlichkeit*). The *Man*-self, but not *das Man*, is thus in principle capable of being 'transcended' in moments of resolute self-ownership. Understanding the difference between the existential *das Man* and the existentiell *Man*-self, however, requires an overview of the structure of Dasein's Being as a whole, especially the difference between *Man*-self and self-ownership. Grasping the role that *das Man* and the *Man*-self play in this general ontological structure can help us to see a way clear of the impasse in the Dreyfus–Olafson debate, and – more importantly – to gain a clearer view of the issues themselves.

## II. The Three Moments of Dasein's Being

For Heidegger, the Being of an entity is the way in which it shows itself to someone. Heidegger refers to human beings with an ordinary German term for existence, 'Dasein' (*SZ* 11); and he adopts the term 'existence' (*Existenz*; *SZ* 12) as an initial title for Dasein's Being. Dasein's Being can be analyzed into three essential and co-constitutive 'moments', or structural features: Dasein's ability to encounter entities, 'projection', and 'thrownness'. Since Dasein's Being is existence, the moments of its Being can be called 'existentials' (*SZ* 12 f.). Although Dasein's Being is a unitary phenomenon (*SZ* 180 f., 191–3, 196, 317, 334, 351; cf. 53, 233), it can be understood to be *structured*, or *articulated*, into these three moments. They are 'equioriginary' (*gleichursprünglich*; *SZ* 133, 161, 349); that is, they are woven together in a web of mutual presupposition.

Each of the three existential moments of Dasein's Being is identified by a characteristic *relation* in which Dasein stands to its possibilities. Heidegger's crucial term 'possibility' (*Möglichkeit*) should be understood not in the logical sense as a potential object or state of affairs that is free of contradiction. Instead, someone's possibilities are what she *is able* to accomplish, become, or otherwise experience (*SZ* 143–5). A possibility in Heidegger's sense is always a possibility for *encountering* some entity. For example, we could say that the activity of hammering these nails into these boards is a practical possibility of someone who knows how to hammer. When someone uses a hammer, she interprets it practically in terms of the possibility of hammering, i.e., as *for* hammering. Heideggerian possibilities are thus much like what we might call someone's *capacities*.

Let us begin with the moment we can call *Dasein's ability to encounter entities*.[11] It belongs essentially to Dasein's Being that it can encounter, or 'discover', *entities* (cf. *GA* 26: 161 f.; cf. *SZ* 60–62). This position builds on Husserl's view that being directed toward an *intentional object* belongs to the essence of consciousness. Heidegger, however, rejects Husserl's view that the most basic intentional relations are to entities encountered in the way of Being of 'presence-at-hand' (*Vorhandenheit*), i.e. as mere objects or states of affairs, essentially unrelated to our practical interests. Heidegger holds that Dasein's ability to encounter present-at-hand entities is derivative, i.e., that it is founded in its ability to encounter physical, intraworldly entities in another way of Being, which he calls 'readiness-to-hand' (*Zuhandenheit*). Heidegger thus devotes his most detailed investigation of Dasein's encounters with intraworldly entities to its dealings with ready-to-hand entities. Readiness-to-hand is the way of Being of those intraworldly entities encountered as equipment useful (or useless) for achieving our practical purposes.

Although Dasein's encounters with entities are by no means restricted to the ready-to-hand – nor even to intraworldly entities as such – Heidegger's





analysis of Dasein's encounters with ready-to-hand equipment is indicative of his views of all of its encounters with entities. For Heidegger, all encounters with entities are interpretative; that is, they all have the structure of encountering the entity *as* something (*SZ* 148–51). What we interpret an entity *as* is the entity's meaning (*Bedeutung*; *SZ* 87, 161) in the encounter. To interpret an item of ready-to-hand equipment as something is to encounter it as *for*, or 'referring to' (*SZ* 68–81), some practical possibility.[12]

Besides Dasein's ability to encounter entities, a second existential moment of Dasein's Being is *projection* (*SZ* 145). In interpreting an entity as referring to a meaning-possibility, Dasein *projects* the entity upon that possibility. What Dasein *projects* is always an entity; what it projects the entity *upon* is always a possibility. To project an entity upon a possibility is to allow what was previously a *mere* possibility to be *actualized*. In projecting an entity upon a possibility, one thus allows oneself to move oneself *toward* the realization of that possibility. We allow ourselves to be carried into the future by projecting entities upon possibilities. In some cases, projection requires what would ordinarily count as *trying*, or *striving*, to actualize a possibility (e.g. engaging in physical or mental exertion). In other cases, however, it can occur more as a matter of habit. Furthermore, not all cases of projection must be conscious. One can *tacitly* project an entity upon a possibility. This can occur, for example, when one is engaged in a task – like driving a car on a straight empty road – that involves skill and coordination, but not necessarily a thematic, conscious awareness of what one is doing.

To interpret an entity as 'referring to' a possibility is to seize or grasp (*ergreifen*) that possibility expressly (*eigens*).[13] For someone to *seize* a possibility *expressly* is thus for her to *project* an entity upon that possibility. When this occurs, Dasein also allows the entity in question to show itself in terms of, or to be 'illuminated' by, the possibility to be actualized in the future. In keeping with the 'lighting' function of expressly seized possibilities, Heidegger refers to the totality of meaning-possibilities as a 'lighted clearing' (*Lichtung*; e.g. *SZ* 133), the 'there' (*Da*; 132 f., 142 f.), or 'the open' (*das Offene*).[14]

The third existential moment of Dasein's Being is its *thrownness* (*Geworfenheit*; *SZ* 135), which Heidegger sometimes also calls its 'facticity' (*Faktizität*). Dasein is thrown into all of the possibilities *disclosed* to it, i.e. into everything it is able to accomplish, become, or otherwise experience. Different ranges of possibilities are disclosed to different Daseins, and are largely determined by a host of social, historical, geographical, and even biological contingencies not of her choosing. In this way, Dasein plays an essentially passive role in the disclosure of possibilities – a feature that Heidegger characterizes as Dasein's 'finding itself' thrown into its possibilities. He also uses the example of moods to illustrate this point (*SZ* 134–7). Just as we always find ourselves already in some mood or other (even

if this is one of even-tempered equanimity), so too do we always find ourselves already thrown into some field of possibilities. Similarly, just as we are never entirely in control of the moods that we are in, so too do we have, at best, limited control over just which possibilities are disclosed to us.

As mentioned earlier in this section, each of the three existential moments of Dasein's Being is identified by a characteristic *relation* in which Dasein stands to its possibilities. In particular, Dasein *encounters* entities by interpreting them as referring to some possibility, it *projects* entities upon possibilities by allowing these possibilities to be actualized in the future, and it finds itself *thrown* into the possibilities disclosed to it. When taken together, these three moments of Dasein's Being indicate that Dasein is not a self-contained substance. Rather, it is in its very Being 'ec-centrically' (*GA* 58: 247; GA 9: 162n59) directed outside itself, toward the entities that it can encounter. As Dasein interpretatively encounters entities, it 'steps over', or 'trans-cends',[15] them, into the meaning-possibilities that it projects. Heidegger exploits the root meanings of the terms 'ec-sistence' (*GA* 9: 323–37; cf. *SZ* 12) and 'ec-stasis' (*SZ* 329, 339, 365; *GA* 24: 377 f.) to characterize the way in which Dasein 'stands out' into the possibilities that make up the lighted clearing, or 'there' ('*Da*'). In his writings after *SZ*, he came to hyphenate '*Da-sein*' (literally, 'being-there'). He does this in order to stress the fact that Da-sein is the entity that has to *be* (*sein*) its 'there' (*Da*; *SZ* 132 f.; cf., e.g., 135, 139, 143, 160, 270, 335). The *Da* is for Heidegger the set of possibilities into which a Dasein finds itself thrown. The term '*sein*' ('being') in 'Da-sein' is a *transitive* verb.[16] For Da-sein to *be* its *Da* is for it to *project* an entity upon some subset of the possibilities that make up the *Da*.

## III. The Three Perspectives of Dasein's Being, and the Correlative Horizons of the *Da*

I will argue shortly that *das Man* is one of three existential horizons of the 'there' – namely the one corresponding to the existential perspective of its Being-with-others. First, however, it will be necessary to sketch out the concepts of *existential horizon* and *existential perspective*. I propose to do this here by developing the visual metaphor implicit in these terms. The basis of this metaphor is the likeness of Dasein's encounters of entities to an observer's perception of objects. (Strictly speaking, since viewing objects is a particular kind of encountering entities, this illustration is more of a synechdoche than a metaphor.)

First of all, each observed object stands in some physical relation to the observer. It is, for example, in front of, below, or above her. Analogously, in each of Dasein's encounters with entities, the encountered entity stands in some ontological relation to Dasein. There are three such basic ontological relations: being *useful* (or use *less*) *to* Dasein, being a *fellow of* Dasein, and





being a possibility *of myself* that is (or is not) being actualized. What Heidegger calls the 'way of Being' of the entity in an encounter is a function of the relation in which it stands to the Dasein that encounters it. Something encountered as useful (or useless) has the way of Being of *readiness-to-hand* (*SZ* 69), or usefulness (*Bewandtnis*; *SZ* 84); something encountered as a *fellow Dasein* has the way of Being of *co-Dasein*;[17] and something encountered as something that I myself am becoming has the way of Being of *Dasein* itself. As is the case with the visual analogue, the very same entity can be encountered in different relations – and thus in different ways of Being – by different Daseins, or by the same Dasein at different times. For example, a human being might be encountered in the way of Being of Dasein by herself, in the way of Being of co-Dasein by some other person (say, by a friend), and in the way of Being of readiness-to-hand by yet another person (say, by a slave-owner or a particularly merciless factory boss).

Note that the relation in which an object appears to an observer depends upon the direction of the observer's gaze, which we can also call the observer's *perspective*. From one perspective, for example, an object might appear in front of the observer, whereas from another perspective the same object might appear to her side or below her. All observation of objects occurs from some such perspective. Let us borrow a term used by Heidegger in his later writings, and define an existential *perspective*[18] as an ability of Dasein to encounter entities standing in a particular ontological relation to it. Recall that Dasein's ability to encounter entities is an existential moment of its Being. This ability can now be differentiated into the existential perspectives that it takes on the entities that it encounters. In particular, Dasein encounters ready-to-hand entities from the perspective of *Being-at*[19]-entities, it encounters its fellow co-Daseins from the perspective of *Being-with-others*, and it encounters the future possibilities that it allows itself to become from the perspective of *Being-itself*. Since Dasein's ability to encounter entities belongs to its Being, so too does each such existential perspective. I will therefore speak of an existential perspective as a perspective of Dasein's Being. It is important to note that an existential perspective is not primarily a particular way of looking *at* Dasein. Rather, it is a distinctive stance that Dasein can *take* in its encounters with entities.

We saw at the beginning of section II that for Heidegger all of Dasein's basic encounters with entities are interpretative. That is, each such encounter is characterized by Dasein's taking the entity *as* something. What the entity is taken *as* is a *meaning*. The disclosure of meaning-possibilities is thus required for entities to be encounterable by Dasein. Note that in our visual analogue to Dasein's encounters with entities, objects in an otherwise dark and dense forest are visible only in the light shed by a clearing. Hence the metaphor of the totality of possibilities as constituting the lighted clearing, as we saw at the end of section II.

To return to our visual analogue, an observational perspective is a stance that an observer takes not just to visible objects, but also to the open clearing in which these objects are visible. Thus a different region of the clearing is visible from each observational perspective. Similarly, an existential perspective is not just Dasein's ability to encounter entities of a particular way of Being. Such a perspective is also Dasein's openness to the disclosure of a particular set of meaning-possibilities – namely, the possibilities that it can interpret these entities *as*. Not only do the entities that Dasein can encounter from a given perspective all stand in the same ontological relation to Dasein, but so do the possibilities in terms of which these entities are encountered. An existential perspective is thus Dasein's openness to the disclosure of the set of possibilities standing in a particular relation to Dasein. We have already seen the way of Being characteristic of the entities that Dasein can encounter from the perspective of Being-at-entities: readiness-to-hand. And we have also seen that ready-to-hand *entities* stand to Dasein in the relation of being *useful* (or useless) *to* it. The meanings in terms of which ready-to-hand entities are encountered, on the other hand, are possible practical *uses* of ready-to-hand equipment. Thus what is disclosed to a particular Dasein from her existential perspective of Being-at-entities is the set of things that she knows how to do with equipment. One of the tasks of the rest of this section will be to identify and describe the meaning-possibilities disclosed to the other two existential perspectives, Being-with-others and Being-oneself. Before we do this, however, we need to explore Heidegger's concept of an existential horizon.

As I suggested at the beginning of this section, the concept of an existential horizon can be understood by analogy with that of a visual horizon. At least four features of such a horizon will be important for our purposes. First, a horizon is essentially related to an observational perspective. In particular, a horizon forms a background against which objects can be seen from a particular perspective. As such – and as is familiar from painting – the horizon forms a context that conditions the ways in which objects in the clearing can be perceived. Second, because of this correspondence between a horizon and a perspective, all of the elements of a horizon can be seen from a single direction of the observer's gaze. Third, a horizon encloses, limits, or bounds *all* of the clearing that one can see from a given perspective (*GA* 24: 437; *GA* 26: 269; *GA* 24: 356; *GA* 29/30: 218–22). Fourth, a horizon is essentially unreachable. No matter how far one travels in a given direction, the horizon always remains outstanding.[20]

Each of these four aspects of a visual horizon is reflected in Heidegger's phenomenological concept of an existential horizon.[21] As I am using the term here, a set of possibilities is the horizon of a given existential perspective if and only if

(H1) these possibilities are capable of being taken as a 'reference' of the entities that Dasein can encounter from that perspective;





(H2) each of these possibilities stands in the same ontological relation to Dasein;

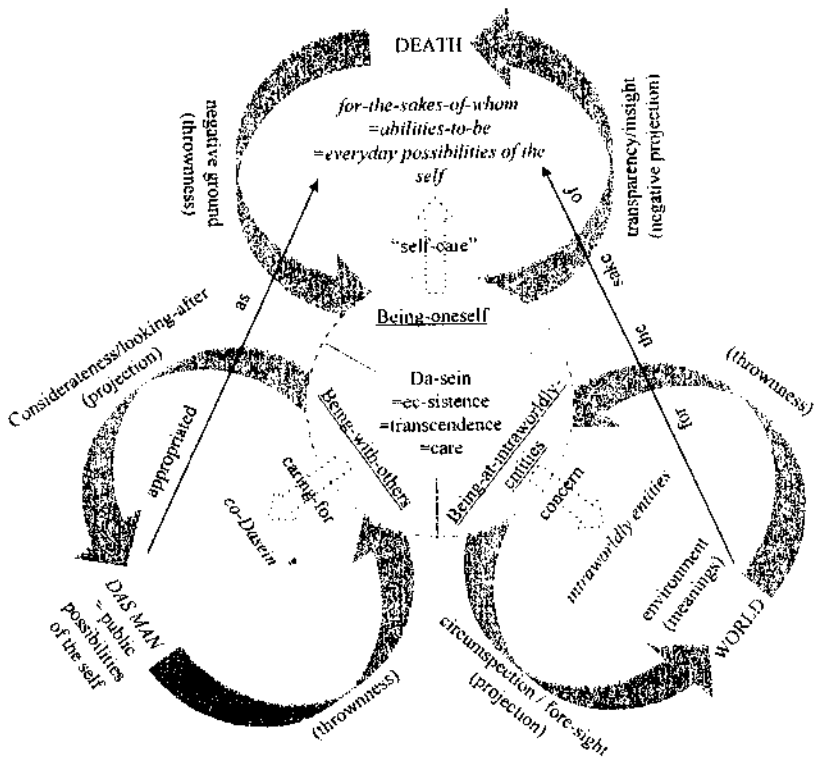
(H3) none of these possibilities stands in a referential relation to any *further* possibility, not included in the set of possibilities in question, standing in this ontological relation to Dasein; and

(H4) it is not the case that any Dasein can experience the simultaneous actualization of all of these possibilities.

I will argue below that the horizon of Dasein's Being-at-entities is the world, the horizon of Dasein's Being-with-others is *das Man*, and the horizon of Dasein's Being-itself is one's own death. This is depicted in the diagram.

Let us turn first to the perspective of Dasein's Being-at-intraworldly-

Dasein's ontological structure




Key:
*italics: encountered entities*
underlined: existential perspective
CAPITALS: EXISTENTIAL HORIZON OF THE "THERE"

entities (or 'Being-at' for short), and its correlative horizon, the world.[22] Being-at is the perspective from which Dasein encounters ready-to-hand entities. Dasein can interpret ready-to-hand entities as having their particular practical uses only because of the prior disclosure of what Heidegger calls an 'environment' (*SZ* 66), i.e. a referential *context* of practical use-meanings. In general, many such practical contexts are disclosed to an individual Dasein. All normal human adults, after all, know how to function in many different environments (in Heidegger's sense), such as dressing, bathing, taking public transportation, etc. Heidegger uses the term 'world' to characterize the totality of cross-referential practical meanings disclosed to an individual Dasein (*SZ* 86). World (*Welt*) thus encompasses every environment (*Umwelt*). Someone's world is the totality of ways that she could use equipment – only a small subset of which she can strive to actualize at any time. It is important to note that Heidegger uses the term 'world' to characterize not a totality of *entities* (as do such philosophers as Husserl), but rather the totality of *practical meanings* into which an individual Dasein finds itself thrown (*SZ* 64 f.).

We can see that the world fulfills the four requirements for being an existential horizon, as enumerated earlier in this section. Since a Dasein's world consists of possibilities for interpreting entities (in particular, ready-to-hand entities), it fulfills condition (H1). Furthermore, the practical possibilities that constitute the world share a unique, if complex, ontological relation to Dasein, namely being something *at* which Dasein works *with* equipment *in order to* accomplish some purpose. For this reason, the world fulfills condition (H2). Now practical meanings are (by definition, as it were) the only things standing in just this ontological relation to Dasein. And the world is (also by definition) the totality of such practical meanings. The world thus fulfills condition (H3), for there can be no further possibilities standing in this ontological relation to Dasein besides those constituting the world. Finally, it is impossible for Dasein to experience the simultaneous actualization of all of the possibilities that constitute its world. It is true that all of these possibilities are *disclosed* to Dasein at any given time. But the great majority of them are merely part of an individual's tacit know-how. Possibilities disclosed in this mode are merely things Dasein potentially *could* do, not fully actualized possibilities. Surely Dasein does from time to time experience the actualization of some proper subset of the possibilities that constitute its world. This occurs, for example, whenever someone completes a task. It is impossible, however, for it ever to experience the simultaneous actualization of *all* of its worldly possibilities. To do so, after all, it would have to be somehow simultaneously in the process of completing all of the tasks that it could ever accomplish on the basis of its practical abilities. Since such an experience is clearly impossible,[23] the world fulfills condition (H4) for being an existential horizon.





Let us turn now from the existential perspective of Being-at-intraworldly-entities and its horizon, the world, to the existential perspective of 'Being-with-one-another' (*Miteinandersein*), or simply 'Being-with' (*Mitsein*). As I suggested above, this is the perspective from which Dasein can encounter other people, or co-Daseins. Heidegger stresses that Dasein's relations to others are distinct from those to either ready-to-hand equipment or itself. 'Being toward others is . . . a unique [*eigenständiger*], irreducible relation of Being' (*SZ* 125). Nevertheless, Heidegger insists that Dasein's Being-with belongs just as essentially to Dasein's Being as does its Being-at-entities (*SZ* 120 f.).[24] That is, even though Dasein can of course be isolated from others, it nevertheless has no choice but to be *able* to encounter other Daseins in their distinctive way of Being (*SZ* 120).

As pointed out above, Dasein's encounters with entities always involve interpreting the entity in terms of some meaning-possibility. And just as the entities that Dasein can encounter from a given existential perspective stand to Dasein in a single ontological relation, so do the meaning-possibilities for encountering such entities. Whereas the meanings disclosed to the perspective of Being-at are possible ways for equipment to be *used* by Dasein, the meanings disclosed from the perspective of Being-with are possible ways for *other Daseins* to *be* (*SZ* 118). In general, 'the others are encountered as what they are; they *are* what they busy themselves with [*was sie betreiben*]' (*SZ* 126). Heidegger gives a few examples in a lecture-course: being 'a cobbler, a tailor, a teacher, a banker' (*GA* 20: 336). In *SZ*, he lists two extremes: being ' "at work" or "just hanging around", . . . the unconcerned, uncircumspective tarrying at everything and at nothing' (*SZ* 120). Just as the worldly meanings stand together in complex relations of 'reference', so too do the meanings for encountering co-Daseins. But again, the interrelations among these meanings are different from those among worldly ones. Take the example of encountering co-Daseins in terms of their social roles or social statuses.[25] Virtually any social role gets its meaning in part from the relations in which it stands to other such roles. Heidegger gives the example of social relations' being 'tailored to professions, classes, and ages' (*SZ* 239). Being the owner of a factory, for example, is possible only because of the relations that the owner stands to suppliers of raw materials, workers, distributors, consumers, etc. Or being a parent is possible only because of the relations in which one stands to one's children.

*Das Man*, I suggest, is the totality of interrelated *meanings* in terms of which co-Daseins are encountered. It is the overarching network of interdependent *possibilities* for others to be: the totality of 'for-the-sakes-of-whom' (*Worumwillen*) that can guide their practical projects. Any Dasein, including oneself, can 'represent', or 'stand in for' (*vertreten*), these possible ways to be (*SZ* 126, 239 f.). It is neither any particular person occupying such social roles, nor is it the 'sum-total' (*die Summe Aller*; *SZ* 126; cf. 127) of all

such persons taken together. This impersonality is one reason why Heidegger's term '*das Man*' is neither masculine nor feminine, but rather neuter (*SZ* 126). Like worldliness (*SZ* 64, 88), it is an existential (*SZ* 127, 129), i.e. an essential feature of Dasein's Being.

Thus defined, *das Man* can be seen to satisfy the conditions for being the horizon of Being-with-one-another. Since it is the network of possible ways for Daseins to be, it is constituted by possibilities to which Dasein can take others as referring. *Das Man* thus satisfies condition (H1). It also satisfies condition (H2). For it consists entirely of possibilities that are related to Dasein in a particular way, namely *as a way it can encounter another Dasein*. And since we defined *das Man* as the *totality* of these possibilities, it also satisfies condition (H3). Finally, for Dasein to experience the simultaneous actualization of all of the possibilities that make up *das Man* would be for it to experience the completion of all possible ways to be a human being. And since at least some such possibilities, especially those involved in flexible, creative careers, are in principle incapable of being completed, such an experience must be impossible. *Das Man* thus satisfies condition (H4) for being the horizon of Being-with.

We can now turn to the final existential perspective: Being-oneself. The entity that one encounters from the perspective of Being-oneself is, naturally enough, oneself: who one is. Heidegger introduces the topic of the self in connection with Dasein's dealings with ready-to-hand entities. To borrow Heidegger's example, imagine someone working *with* a hammer *at* hammering (a nail), then *with* what has been hammered *at* securing something, and then *with* something secured *at* protecting against inclement weather. Finally, the protection against inclement weather "'is" *for the sake of* housing Dasein' (*SZ* 84). Heidegger stresses that housing Dasein is not a possible way in which an intraworldly entity (such as a hammer, a roof, or a house) can be *useful* to Dasein. Instead, it is 'a possibility of Dasein's Being' (*SZ* 84) itself, for the sake of whom (*um . . . willen*) Dasein protects itself against inclement weather. He continues:

> The totality of usefulness itself, however, finally goes back to an in-order-to that has *no* further usefulness; which itself is not an entity in the way of Being of ready-to-hand entities within the world, but rather an entity whose Being is determined as Being-in-the-world, [and] to whose constitution of Being worldliness itself belongs. This primary in-order-to is not an in-order-to as a possible at-what with a use. The primary 'for-what' is a for-the-sake-of-whom. The 'for-the-sake-of-whom', however, always concerns the Being of *Dasein*, the entity that goes about its Being essentially *for the sake of* its own Being [*dem es in seinem Sein wesenhaft* um *dieses Sein selbst geht*]. (*SZ* 84)

The basic point here is that the practical use-meanings in terms of which Dasein encounters ready-to-hand intraworldly entities are ultimately 'joined





together' (*SZ* 192; cf. 122, 359) – via often complex chains of overlapping referential relations – to some *final* possibility with a different character from that of ready-to-hand meanings. Instead of being encountered as useful in order to accomplish some further task, this final possibility is thus encountered as an end in itself. Instead of being something that Dasein can *use* an entity *for*, it is one that Dasein itself can *be* or *become*. Heidegger refers to this final possibility as a for-the-sake-of-whom (*Worumwillen*).

The self, for Heidegger, exists in the projection of for-the-sakes-of-whom. It is crucial to note that the entities that Dasein encounters from the perspective of Being-itself are themselves primarily *possibilities*. Thus he writes: 'Dasein always *is* its possibility' (*SZ* 42; cf. 43, 145), and that Dasein 'is primarily Being-possible. Dasein is always what it can be and how it is its possibility' (*SZ* 143). The self at a given time consists just of Dasein's current projection of particular for-the-sakes-of-whom. For this reason, Heidegger characterizes the self as constituted by 'abilities-to-be' (*Seinkönnen*; *SZ* 143). This truly radical view allows Heidegger to reject traditional views of the self as a substance (*SZ* 303; cf. *GA* 22: 184), or even as a Kantian non-objectifiable transcendental unity.[26] For Heidegger, on the other hand, the self is rather the dynamic movement from potentiality to actuality of the specific possible for-the-sakes-of-whom that one is currently projecting as a possibility of oneself.

Naturally, not *all* for-the-sakes-of-whom need be possibilities of *oneself*. For example, one can build something, such as a house, for the sake of someone, even if the intended inhabitant is not oneself. In such a case, one's practical dealings with things would be for the sake of another person, or co-Dasein. Nevertheless, even such actions are performed *ultimately* for the sake of a possibility of oneself. For example, my doing something for the sake of someone else is for the sake of myself as a friend, partner, benefactor, etc. This is a large part of what Heidegger means by his formal characterization of Dasein: 'The being *for the sake of whom* this entity [i.e. Dasein] goes about its being, is in each case my own.'[27] 'As an entity that goes about for the sake of its Being, Dasein *uses itself*, whether explicitly or not, primarily *for itself*. Using itself for the sake of itself, Dasein "uses itself up"' (*SZ* 333). Dasein's interactions with others, like its dealings with intraworldly tools, are guided ultimately by its own interpretations of itself.[28]

## IV. Justification and Clarification of this Interpretation

On the interpretation I have suggested so far, Dasein exists simultaneously and equioriginarily from out of three interrelated perspectives (Being-at-entities, Being-with-others, and Being-oneself). Each such perspective corresponds to Dasein's ability to encounter a distinctive way of Being (intraworldly readiness-to-hand, co-Dasein, and Dasein's self) in terms of a

particular horizon of possibilities (the world, *das Man*, and death). This view of the architectonic of Dasein's Being is likely to be somewhat controversial. Commentators often conceive of the total horizon of possibilities that Heidegger calls the disclosedness of the 'there' (*Da*) either in a rather undifferentiated manner,[29] or as consisting of just *two* such horizons: the world and the self.[30] Now the tripartite horizonality of the 'there' is admittedly not immediately evident on the surface of the text of *SZ*. Nevertheless, there is ample textual evidence that this is in fact how Heidegger saw things. First, this particular tripartite differentiation permeates both *SZ* and the lecture-courses surrounding its publication.[31] Second, because Heidegger most concretely characterizes Dasein's whole Being as *care* (*Sorge*; *SZ* 192), he adopts a distinct term for the mode of Dasein's caring about, or meaningfully encountering, entities in each of these basic ways of Being in terms of its respective horizon. Concern (*Be*sorge*n*) is the way in which Dasein deals with ready-to-hand entities in terms of their practical usefulness (*SZ* 67, 121, 143, 146, 193). 'Caring-for' (*Für*sorge) is Heidegger's neutral ontological term for the way in which Dasein encounters other people (*SZ* 121–4). And he suggests 'self-care' (*Selbst*sorge)[32] as a possible term for the way in which one deals with oneself. Third, because he uses the metaphors of 'lighting' (*Lichtung*; *SZ* 132 f.) and 'sight' (*Sicht*) for the disclosure of the possibilities in terms of which we encounter such entities, he expressly appropriates terms for exactly three kinds of 'sight', each one of which illuminates the kinds of possibilities that constitute a particular horizon (*SZ* 146). Circumspection (*Um*sicht), or, alternatively, fore-sight (*Vor*-sicht; *SZ* 150), illuminates the possibilities that constitute each of the regions of the world that Heidegger calls an 'environment' (*Umwelt*). 'Considerateness' (*Rück*sicht), or, alternately, 'looking-after' (*Nach*sicht; *SZ* 123), illuminates the possibilities of *das Man* in terms of which one encounters other Daseins. Finally, transparency (*Durch*sichtig*keit*), or insight (*Ein*sicht; *GA* 24: 393), illuminates one's own death, thus allowing Dasein to take 'ownership' of itself.[33]

There are a few important things to note about these three horizonal-perspectival pairs. First, each of Dasein's perspectives, along with its respective horizon, is an *existential*. That is, each is an essential structure of Dasein's Being: something that Dasein can *never* do without. In this respect, the three horizonal-perspectival pairs are like the three moments of Dasein's Being: its ability to encounter entities, projection, and thrownness. Second, however, the moments of Dasein's Being do not overlap with the horizonal-perspectival pairs. Instead, they cut across them. That is, each perspective is a particular way in which Dasein can encounter entities in a particular way of Being, by projecting them upon possibilities into which it finds itself thrown.

Third, these horizonal-perspectival pairs do not exist in isolation. Instead, they are intimately related to each other. We have already seen one





particularly salient way in which they interact. For there is a direct connection between the perspective of Dasein's Being-at-entities and that of Being-oneself. Recall that Dasein encounters intraworldly ready-to-hand entities in terms of the world: the complex network of practical referential relations that allow a tool to be used *with* another tool, *at* an activity, and *in order to* accomplish some practical goal. We saw that such dealings are always guided by a final reference with a qualitatively different character: a 'for-the-sake-of-whom'. This final possibility, which gives meaning and direction to Dasein's concerned dealings with intraworldly entities, is a possibility of Dasein's self. In this way, the entities that Dasein encounters from the perspective of Being-itself determine the ultimate purpose of its encounters with ready-to-hand entities from the perspective of Being-at-entities.

A second salient way in which the perspectives of Dasein's Being interact with each other can be seen in the fact that an individual Dasein does not spontaneously generate the for-the-sakes-of-whom that it encounters from the perspective of Being-itself. Instead, Dasein appropriates these possibilities of its everyday Being-itself from *das Man*, the horizon in terms of which Dasein encounters others. He describes this in detail in a lecture-course held less than two years before the publication of *SZ*:

> [I]n the 'by and large' of one's everyday concern, one's own Dasein is always what it busies itself with. *One* [Man] is oneself what *one* [man] does. Dasein's everyday interpretation of itself takes its horizon of interpreting and naming from its matters of constant concern. *One* [Man] is a cobbler, a tailor, a teacher, a banker. In this way Dasein is something that others, too, can be and are. The others are environmentally there too – one takes their co-Dasein into account – not only insofar as the matters of concern stand for the others in the character of usability and helpfulness [*Beiträglichkeit*], but also insofar as the others concern themselves with the same thing [as oneself] . . . Co-Being with [others] is in a relation to them. That is, one's own concern is more or less successful or useful with respect to the others and to what they busy themselves with; [it] is regarded as more or less excellent, lagging behind, esteemed, or the like, in relation to those that concern themselves with the same thing. The others are not just merely present-at-hand in one's concern for what one [*man*] does with, for, and against them. Rather, concern lives constantly as concern in the *care for a difference from them*, even if only in order to level off the difference – whether one's own Dasein lags behind and wants, so to speak, to catch up with respect to the others; or whether it is out to keep the others down in superiority to them. (GA 20: 336 f.)

In this way, the complex network of interrelated meanings of *das Man*, the horizon of Dasein's Being-with-others, provides a 'content' to the possibilities of Dasein's Being-itself. Each possibility of *das Man* can in principle be taken over, appropriated, or 'represented' by any Dasein. 'The *representability* of one Dasein by another belongs incontestably to the possibilities of Being of Being-with-one-another in the world' (*SZ* 239). Naturally, Dasein does not create its cultural possibilities, but rather finds itself always 'handed

over' (*überantwortet*; *SZ* 135) to them. Conversely, these possibilities can be thought of as Dasein's 'inheritance' (*SZ* 383). And Dasein acquires its understanding of these possibilities because it 'at first grows up' (*zunächst hineinwächst*) into the average interpretedness that constitutes its culture (*SZ* 169; cf. *GA* 20: 339 f.; *GA* 63: 98 f.). Because *das Man* is an existential, Dasein 'can never extricate itself' fully from it (*SZ* 169).

These connections among Being-oneself and both Being-at-entities and Being-with-others reveal that Being-oneself is in some sense the 'central' perspective of Dasein's Being. For the possibilities that constitute Dasein's self are appropriated from the horizon of Being-with-others, and also serve to guide its concerned Being-at-entities. Nevertheless, the possibilities of Dasein's everyday Being-itself are appropriated from the horizon of *das Man*, and would be unable to be fulfilled without the perspective of Being-at-entities and its horizon of the world. This is ultimately the way in which the three perspectives of Dasein's Being are 'equioriginary', or mutually supporting.

## V. Death as the Horizon of Dasein's Being-Itself

On the interpretation I am suggesting, the horizon of the perspective of Dasein's Being-itself is its own death. Now since Heidegger to my knowledge does not make this entirely explicit, this suggestion might raise some controversy. I will support my reading by arguing that death as Heidegger understands it meets the conditions for being the horizon of Dasein's Being-itself, as I enumerated in section III. I will begin with conditions (H2), (H3), and (H4), saving condition (H1) for last.

Recall that the entities encountered from the perspective of Being-oneself are possible ways for Dasein to be. One's own death is a possibility of oneself in this sense, although admittedly a highly unique one. For as 'the possibility . . . *of the impossibility of existence at all*' (*SZ* 262), or 'the simple negativity of Dasein [*die schlechthinnige Nichtigkeit des Daseins*]' (*SZ* 306), it is in fact *the* way for Dasein *not* to be. Nevertheless, one's own death is surely a possible way for *oneself* to be – as opposed to a possible way for *another* Dasein to be,[34] or a possible way for something to be *useful*. In this way, death thus fulfills condition (H2) for being the horizon of Dasein's Being-itself.

Heidegger discusses several further ways in which death is a distinctive possibility of oneself. It is certain (because it is unavoidable; *SZ* 255–8, 264 f., 307 f.), indeterminate (because it could in principle occur at any time; *SZ* 258, 265, 308), and one's 'ownmost' possibility (because it is the only for-the-sake-of-whom that is in no way inherited by Dasein from the horizon of *das Man*; *SZ* 263, 307). Death is also 'non-relational' (*SZ* 263 f., 307). This fourth characteristic of death implies that it fulfills condition (H3) for being the





horizon of Dasein's Being-itself. We saw earlier that both the practical possibilities of the world and the possible social roles that constitute *das Man* get their meaning in part from the ways in which they 'refer' to other such possibilities. A hammer gets its meaning from its possible relations to other items of the workshop (such as nails and boards), for example, and the social role of a parent is essentially linked to that of a child. Death is completely different from these possibilities in this respect. Now of course in a sense death plays a role in various aspects of social life, such as burial, medical treatment, life insurance, estate management, and even taxation. When dealt with in these ways, however, death is encountered either as a possibility of someone else (such as a spouse, friend, or client), or as a relatively ordinary possibility of oneself (as when the anticipation of one's death structures some everyday activity, such as writing a will). To treat death like this, however, is not to encounter it in its full existential significance. When encountered in this way, death does not get its meaning from being opposed to *particular* possibilities of oneself (as one does when one writes one kind of will rather than another, or chooses one life insurance policy over another). Instead, death stands opposed to *all* other possibilities of oneself – as their absolute negation. Death encountered in this way thus falls entirely outside of the web of meanings that make up the world and *das Man*. Death is an entirely unique possibility of oneself, for it 'refers' to none beyond itself. This is what Heidegger means by calling death Dasein's 'outermost' (*äußerste*) possibility (*SZ* 262; cf. 263). As such, death fulfills condition (H3) for being the horizon of Dasein's Being-itself. There is no further possibility of oneself to which death 'refers'.

A fifth and final characteristic of death is that it is 'unsurpassable' (*unüberholbar*; *SZ* 264, 307). In other words, death is unique among one's possibilities in that it always and necessarily 'stands out' as an unactualized possibility as long as one exists. By this, Heidegger does not mean to say that we are always thinking – either consciously or unconsciously – about death. Rather, he means only that as long as an individual Dasein has possible ways to be, death is among them. The fact that death is unsurpassable implies that it fulfills condition (H4) for being the horizon of the perspective of Being-oneself. That is, death is a possibility of oneself whose actualization one cannot experience. Naturally, Heidegger does not mean to say that Dasein is immortal. Far from it. Rather, he means to say that death is the only possible way to be such that its actualization would be the end of Dasein (e.g. *SZ* 234). And since only an existing Dasein can experience anything, one's own death is not a possibility whose actualization one can experience.

Let us turn now to see the way in which death fulfills condition (H1) for being the horizon of Dasein's Being-itself. Essentially, it does so because it is possible for Dasein to encounter its everyday self – i.e. the concrete for-the-sakes-of-whom that it appropriates from *das Man* – as 'referring' to death. To

do so is for Dasein to be *eigentlich*, i.e., to take 'ownership' of itself.[35] As Heidegger's initial definition in *SZ* of this term indicates, a self in this mode is one that '*sich zueigen ist*' (*SZ* 42; cf. *GA* 24: 228). Macquarrie and Robinson translate this difficult expression as '[is] something of its own'; Stambaugh translates it as 'belongs to itself'. 'Is self-appropriating' and 'is self-owning' would be other possibilities. He later defines the self-owning self as the 'expressly seized *self*' (*SZ* 129). Later still, in his discussion of projection, Heidegger defines self-ownership as the mode of projecting oneself upon a for-the-sake-of-whom in a manner that 'emerges out of one's own self as such' (*SZ* 146).

Heidegger makes it clear that for Dasein to take ownership of itself is for it to 'own up' to itself, i.e. to take responsibility for what it is (*SZ* 288). This is different from, but analogous to, taking moral responsibility for one's actions.[36] Instead of taking responsibility for what one *does morally* (or immorally), self-ownership involves taking responsibility for what one *is existentially*. Heidegger thus calls self-ownership, or resoluteness, 'the *loyalty* [Treue] of existence to its own self' (*SZ* 391). In particular, taking ownership of oneself involves taking responsibility for the negativity that belongs essentially to Dasein's Being. In this way, taking ownership of oneself can be understood as a positive response to the call of a sort of existential 'conscience', again formally similar to the moral conscience (*SZ* 283). Like the moral conscience, the existential conscience is a 'call' from oneself to oneself (*SZ* 272–80) to take responsibility for something that one owes, i.e. one's 'debt' or 'guilt' (*Schuld*; *SZ* 280–9). Whereas the moral conscience calls us to take responsibility for what one owes morally in virtue of the actions one performs, the existential conscience calls us to take responsibility for what one owes existentially in virtue of the kind of entity one is. Furthermore, although both moral and existential owing are negative, the nature of what one owes differs in the two cases. What one owes morally is what one *ought* to have done, but failed to do. Somewhat paradoxically, what one owes existentially is something one *cannot* do, in virtue of one's Being. Heidegger calls what Dasein owes existentially 'being the ground of a negativity' (*Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*; *SZ* 283). Two aspects of this existential negativity are especially salient. Both of these existential negativities are kinds of *finitude* characteristic of Dasein's Being.

A first kind of existential negativity is a feature of Dasein's thrownness into the possibilities that make up the 'there' (*Da*), and which Heidegger refers to as Dasein's being the (thrown) ground:

> The self that as such has to lay the ground of itself can *never* be master of it, and yet has to take over being-the-ground existingly . . . Being-the-ground, i.e. existing as thrown, Dasein constantly remains back behind its possibilities. It is never existent *before* its ground, but rather always is only *from out of it* and *as it*. Accordingly, being-the-ground means *never* being master of one's ownmost Being from the ground up. This 'not' belongs to the existential sense of thrownness . . . *Not by* itself, but *discharged to* itself from out of the ground, in order to be *as the ground*. (*SZ* 284 f.)





This first kind of existential negativity is an aspect of the finitude of Dasein's Being similar to the finitude that Kant saw as characteristic of human, as opposed to divine, intuition. God's intuition is for Kant infinite, i.e., it can create its objects at will. Human intuition, however, is finite, i.e., its objects must be passively given from outside itself. Similarly, Dasein can be a self only by projecting possibilities that are by and large not of an individual Dasein's own making, but are rather its cultural, historical, and even biological inheritance. As we saw at the end of section III, these possibilities of Dasein's self are ways for it to be that it appropriates from *das Man*. This first kind of negativity, or finitude, of Dasein's Being thus lies in the fact that Dasein has no choice but to be (i.e. project) possible for-the-sakes-of-whom given to it from *das Man*.

A second kind of existential negativity is what Heidegger calls the 'negative project' (*SZ* 285). Heidegger writes:

> Able to be, [Dasein] always stands in one possibility or other; it is constantly *not* another possibility and has renounced it in its existentiell projection. . . . Projection *as projection* is . . . itself essentially *negative*. . . This negativity belongs to Dasein's being free for its existentiell possibilities. Freedom, however, only *is* in the choice of the one possibility, and that means in bearing the not-having-chosen and the not-being-able-to-choose-also of the other possibilities. (*SZ* 285)

No matter which for-the-sake-of-whom one pursues, merely doing so will forever close off the possibility of being something (or some*one*) else. This is of course not to say that actualizing any for-the-sake-of-whom precludes the possibility of actualizing *any* other. For there are surely many for-the-sakes-of-whom that one can strive to actualize simultaneously or consecutively. One can simultaneously pursue a career and have a family life, and one can be consecutively married to different people. Heidegger's point here is that the pursuit of even such possibilities of oneself does not leave the entire range of possibilities entirely unchanged. For example, the number of distinct careers that someone can seriously pursue is severely restricted. Although someone can be first, say, a lawyer and then a mechanic, no one can then go on to be a doctor, a physicist, and so on *ad infinitum*.

This second kind of negativity, like the first, is a manifestation of Dasein's essential finitude. Unlike the first, however, this latter kind of finitude is directly related to the unique possibility of death: one's end, or finale. For if we were immortal, then there would be virtually no limit to the number of possibilities of ourselves that we could actualize. Since self-ownership

involves taking responsibility for both the first and the second kind of existential negativity, it also requires transparency about one's mortality.

As we saw earlier in this section, death is a possibility of oneself that is 'unsurpassable'. That is, it always remains 'outstanding' as long as Dasein exists. Unlike moral or financial debts that one might owe, death is an essentially uncancelable debt (*SZ* 242 f.; cf. 307). To own up to it – i.e. to take responsibility for it – thus cannot involve making it go away. Rather, to own up to it is to take on expressly the full existential implications of the debt – analogously to someone's taking on the financial implications of a financial debt, or the moral implications of their actions. Accordingly, Heidegger calls the projection characteristic of self-ownership 'running ahead' (*Vorlaufen*; *SZ* 262–6, 336) into death. Naturally, to run ahead into death is *not* to attempt to *actualize* the possibility of death (*SZ* 261 f.). Existential conscience does not call Dasein to commit suicide. Rather, it calls Dasein to appropriate some ordinary possibility of itself from *das Man* – as required by the first kind of existential negativity – but now with a full experience of the second kind of existential negativity, the negative project. That is, in taking ownership of itself Dasein projects some possibility of itself in full clarity of the fact that doing so will irrevocably preclude the possibility of realizing some others. Since this negativity characteristic of projection is directly related to Dasein's mortality, self-ownership requires transparency about one's own death.

There is a further crucial element in Heidegger's concept of self-ownership: the experience of freedom. Kant has convincingly argued that in order to take moral responsibility for one's actions, one must experience one's will as free: i.e. as autonomously choosing *one* maxim of action from among a range of possible alternatives. Similarly, taking ownership of oneself requires that one must experience oneself as free in the projection of *these* for-the-sakes-of-whom rather than *those*. This is one reason why Heidegger writes that self-owning Dasein 'has chosen itself' (*SZ* 287). Now in ordinary experiences of the freedom to choose from among a range of possibilities, one chooses with reference to some further possibility presupposed as fixed. In such ordinary choices, one evaluates the presently available options with an eye to their relative efficacy for realizing this goal. For example, one might choose to attend one out of a range of professional schools with regard to the anticipated likelihood that doing so would lead to a successful career. But taking responsibility for what one is existentially requires something more: experiencing *all* of the possibilities of oneself as *merely* possibilities. This is because one cannot take responsibility for projecting a possibility that one has not freely chosen. And since taking ownership of oneself involves taking responsibility for one's *whole* self – and not just a part of oneself – self-ownership presupposes that one experience oneself as free to choose from among *all* possible for-the-sakes-of-whom disclosed in *das Man*.

So far, we have seen that self-ownership requires that one appropriate some





particular for-the-sake-of-whom from *das Man* in full transparency about death, and that this appropriation be experienced as an entirely free choice. It is precisely the possibility of making such a transparent choice that is disclosed in the mood of anxiety. For anxiety accompanies a disclosure of possibilities that is unique in two ways. First, anxiety differs from moods such as fear in that it is not 'about' any intraworldly entity or co-Dasein (*SZ* 185 f.), but rather about one's ownmost possibility: to die (*SZ* 187, 251, 265). Second, anxiety pertains not just to *particular* possibilities appropriated from *das Man* (with others regarded as fixed ends), but rather to *all* at once.[37] That is, in anxiety we regard all possibilities of ourselves as things that we *could* pursue, without regarding ourselves as in any way bound to do so. Even possibilities of oneself that often count as absolutely fixed (say, oneself as a moral individual, as beholden to God's commands, as a loyal member of a community or a family) are also encountered in anxiety as matters for potential choice. For this reason:

> The discovered totality of usefulness of ready-to-hand and present-at-hand intraworldly entities is as such without significance. In anxiety, neither this nor that is encountered with which it could have a relatedness [*Bewandtnis*]. (*SZ* 186)

The radical disclosure in anxiety of our freedom brings with it what Heidegger characterizes as the 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*) feeling of 'not being at home' in one's everyday possibilities (*SZ* 188), and what Sartre calls the radical 'vertigo of possibility'.[38] He thus characterizes the mood characteristic of self-ownership as 'readiness for anxiety' (*SZ* 296), and existential conscience as 'the call attuned by the mood of anxiety' (*SZ* 277). Being in anxiety is a necessary – though not a sufficient – condition for taking ownership of oneself.

One reason why experiencing anxiety is not sufficient for self-ownership is that it is always in principle possible to brush anxiety off, busying oneself instead exclusively with one's dealings with intraworldly entities and the everyday for-the-sakes-of-whom that guide them, and all the while occluding death. Although anxiety and its articulation in the call of conscience *present* the possibility of a radical choice of oneself, they do not *force* it. An unowning response to anxiety occurs, for example, when one says after the bout of anxiety has subsided that 'it was really nothing' (*SZ* 187), thus ignoring what conscience 'tells' Dasein about its own finitude. Heidegger accounts for the possibility of such an unowning response to anxiety and the call of conscience by saying that making a transparent radical choice to appropriate certain for-the-sakes-of-whom from *das Man* implies that one must first have *chosen* to make such a choice (*SZ* 268). Accordingly, Heidegger calls this kind of resolute choosing to choose not just responding to

the call of conscience, but 'willing-to-have-conscience' (*Gewissenhabenwollen*; *SZ* 270, 288; *GA* 20: 441).

Naturally, the resolute choice to appropriate certain possible for-the-sakes-of-whom from *das Man* in transparency about one's existential finitude gives absolutely no counsel on *which* such possibilities Dasein should choose. For such counsel could only be given with reference to some over-arching for-the-sake-of-whom – even one as vague and presumably practically omnipresent as happiness – regarded as fixed. As we have seen, however, a Dasein can take ownership of itself in Heidegger's sense only if it makes a radical choice of possibilities without regarding *any* as fixed. Thus Heidegger asks rhetorically: 'But upon what does Dasein resolve itself in resoluteness? Toward what should it resolve itself?' And he replies: '*Only* the resolve itself can give the answer' (*SZ* 298). This is because

> nothing can be pointed out in the content of the call that the voice [of the call of existential conscience] recommends and imposes. . . . The call discloses nothing that could be as *something with which we can concern ourselves* positively or negatively, because it means an ontologically entirely different Being: *existence*. (*SZ* 294)

In the experience of anxiety, there is nothing that Dasein regards as a fixed standard to guide its resolute choice from among the possible for-the-sakes-of-whom of *das Man*.[39]

We can now see how Heidegger's analysis of the call of conscience for Dasein to 'own up' to its existential debt reveals that death also fulfills condition (H1): being a possibility to which Dasein can encounter the concrete possibilities of itself as 'referring'. To be sure, the manner in which these concrete for-the-sakes-of-whom 'refer' to death is unique. It is quite different from the way in which Dasein encounters ready-to-hand entities as 'referring' to their practical uses. For one's own death can be of absolutely no practical use to oneself in carrying out worldly projects. And this kind of 'reference' is also quite different from the way in which Dasein encounters co-Daseins as 'referring' to possibilities of *das Man*. As we have seen, the way in which conscience calls Dasein to allow itself to move toward death is not by renouncing all concrete possibilities of itself disclosed in the horizon of *das Man*. Instead, it calls Dasein to appropriate some subset of these possibilities in a manner that is illuminated by Dasein's 'transparency' about, or 'insight' into, its own mortality. When expressly seized in this manner, death 'illuminates' these possibilities of oneself, by revealing the full existential implications of its projecting them. In particular, as we have seen, transparency about one's death discloses the fact that in choosing to project one subset of possible for-the-sakes-of-whom, one simultaneously closes off the possibility of ever realizing certain others. Following Kierkegaard, Heidegger calls the moment in which such illumination occurs the '*Augen-*





*blick*' (literally: the blink, or view, of an eye; *SZ* 328, 338, 348 f.). In the *Augen-blick*, Dasein gets a glimpse into what Heidegger calls the 'situation' (*SZ* 328). The situation is simply the 'there' (*Da*) – the total horizon of possibilities into which Dasein finds itself thrown – but now for the first time disclosed in the light shed by Dasein's experience of its finitude, and as potential matters of choice (*SZ* 299 f.; cf. 338).

Only by confronting one's own death in this way can one 'view' the possibilities of oneself, one's practical dealings with equipment, and one's social interactions with others 'in the light of' one's ownmost possibility. In this way, expressly grasping one's own death allows Dasein to *interpret itself* as finite. This is the sense in which Dasein can encounter the ordinary possibilities of itself *in terms of* death. And it is in precisely this sense that death is the horizon of Being-oneself.[40]

## VI. The Man-self and Self-ownership as Existentiell Modes of Being-oneself

In section III, we examined in detail the three *existential* perspectives of Dasein's Being: Being-at-entities, Being-with-others, and Being-oneself. These perspectives are existential because they belong 'essentially' to Dasein's Being, which Heidegger calls 'existence'. At any one time, Dasein can exist in (or, better, from out of) any of its three perspectives in either of two basic *existentiell* modes, or ways of enactment (*Vollzugsweisen*). The term 'existentiell' is to be understood in contrast with 'existential'. Something is existentiell if it *can* belong to Dasein, but does not belong *essentially* to the structure of Dasein's Being (*SZ* 12 f.). All that is existentially necessary is that Dasein at any given time must exist from out of each perspective in exactly *one* of these two ways. What differentiates these two existentiell modes of enactment of each perspective is whether or not the respective entities are encountered by Dasein *expressly seizing* (*eigens ergreifen*)[41] some set of possibilities that belong to the corresponding horizon, as defined earlier. These existentiell modes can be summarized in the following table:

| | existentiell modes of enacting the existential perspective: | |
|---|---|---|
| existential perspective: | *with horizon expressly seized* | *with horizon occluded* |
| Being-at-intraworldy-entities | dealing with the ready-to-hand | observing the present-at-hand |
| Being-with(-others) | 'leaping ahead' of the other | 'leaping in' for the other |
| Being-oneself | self-ownership/resoluteness | the *Man*-self/fallenness |

There are two basic ways of Being of intraworldly entities: readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand. Each corresponds to an existentiell mode of enactment of Dasein's Being-at-entities. In treating a particular environment – and ultimately the world as a whole – as the background in terms of which it interprets these entities, Dasein strives to actualize the possibilities in terms of which it encounters these entities. In so doing, Dasein allows itself to be moved toward these future possibilities in such a way that they illuminate the entities with which it is concerned. Thus Dasein's encounters of intraworldly entities in the way of Being of readiness-to-hand always involve expressly seizing their practical possibilities. Dasein, however, can also encounter intraworldly entities from the perspective of Being-at-entities in the way of Being of presence-at-hand. In this existentiell mode of Being-at-entities, intraworldly entities show themselves in a manner that Heidegger calls entirely 'de-worlded' (*entweltlicht*; *SZ* 65, 75, 112 f.). Only once an intraworldly entity has been experienced as 'cut off' (*abgeschnitten*; *SZ* 158) from the context of practical meanings in which it is intelligible as ready-to-hand can Dasein for the first time strive to encounter it as it is 'in itself'. That is, the entity is discovered not in terms of the horizon of the world, but rather solely in terms of the entity's own appearance (*Aussehen, eidos*; *SZ* 61, 138; cf. 63, 69, 73, 172). Only in the way of Being of presence-at-hand is an intraworldly entity observed as a mere object with merely physical properties.

The two basic existentiell modes of Dasein's Being-with-others (in which Dasein 'cares for' others) receive considerably less attention in *SZ* than does the distinction between readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand. In addition to being extremely sketchy in *SZ*, however, Heidegger's account of the existentiell modes of Being-with-others is largely irrelevant to our concerns. What is significant for our purposes is only that he holds that there are two basic modes of encountering others, and that he implies that what distinguishes them is whether or not the horizon corresponding to the perspective of Being-with-others is expressly grasped.[42]

Much more important for our purposes, however, are the two existentiell modes of existing from out of the perspective of Being-oneself: self-ownership (*Eigentlichkeit*) and its opposite. Let us begin with the latter, which Heidegger calls 'unownedness' (*Uneigentlichkeit*), 'everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*), 'falling' (*Verfallen*),[43] or – most importantly for our purposes – the '*Man*-self' (e.g. *SZ* 129). Heidegger employs the term 'publicness' (*Öffentlichkeit*) to characterize the ontological character of this mode. In publicness, all particular activities of the *Man*-self are characterized by a 'subservience' (*Botmäßigkeit*) to the others (*SZ* 126). This applies just as much to someone's attempts to establish a distance (*Abstand*) from them – when one attempts to be apart from, different from, or superior to them – as it is does to someone's attempts to conform to their norms and expectations. In all such efforts, Dasein still understands itself – whether positively or





negatively – exclusively in terms of the others. All self-interpretation in the mode of the *Man*-self takes place within 'the public interpretedness of *das Man*' (*SZ* 254). When one understands oneself *exclusively* in terms of what 'one' (*man*) does – i.e. what is permissible according to the often implicit normative conventions of one's culture or other social group – then one's self has the character of 'averageness' (*Durchschnittlichkeit*; *SZ* 127). Like subservience, however, averageness in Heidegger's sense is not the same as conformity.[44] Even someone who tried his utmost to distinguish himself in every way from the others could well be still entirely 'average' in Heidegger's sense, for he could still be understanding his own possibilities *entirely* in terms of other people. Such a person could be called an 'average' non-conformist. A self who is entirely average in this way is characterized by a 'leveling' (*Einebnung*) of the possibilities of its Being-itself down to the level of the others (*SZ* 127).

Heidegger at times seems to suggest that unowned Dasein in some sense *becomes* other Daseins. For example, he writes in an initial characterization of the *Man*-self: 'the others are those from which one oneself mostly does *not* distinguish oneself, among whom one also is' (*SZ* 118). 'Not *being* itself [*Nicht es selbst ist*], the others have taken his Being away from him. The whim of others reigns over Dasein's everyday possibilities of Being' (*SZ* 126). Surely, though, Heidegger is taking some poetic license in such passages. For he cannot mean to say that Dasein in the unowned mode of Being-itself is literally *numerically identical* to other people.[45] And neither does the *Man*-self identify itself with 'some "universal subject"' (*SZ* 128), such as Hegelian *Geist* is sometimes thought to be. Heidegger's more careful statements make his actual views clearer. For he insists that the 'others' to whom the *Man*-self is subservient 'are not *particular* others. . . . The "who" [of the everyday, unowned *Man*-self] is not this person and not that, not oneself, and not some and not the sum of all. The "who" is the neuter, *das Man*' (*SZ* 126), who is, strictly speaking, 'no one' (*SZ* 127 f.). Understanding the *Man*-self requires precisely differentiating between co-Daseins on the one hand, and *das Man* – the horizon of possible for-the-sakes-of-whom in terms of which they are encountered – on the other. Strictly speaking, other Daseins do not dominate the existentiell mode of the *Man*-self. What dominates is instead the *horizon* in terms of which other Daseins are encountered: *das Man*.

To say that the 'who' of the everyday *Man*-self is *das Man*, however, is not to say that the *Man*-self is *identical* with *das Man*.[46] They are, however, intimately related phenomena. For Heidegger characterizes the way in which '*das Man* develops its real dictatorship' (*SZ* 126), i.e. its 'stubborn dominance' (*SZ* 128), as follows: '*Das Man prescribes* [*schreibt vor*] the way of Being of everydayness' (*SZ* 127; emphasis added). In fact, for *das Man* to be able to 'prescribe' the way of Being of the *Man*-self, the two cannot

be identical. He characterizes the nature of this 'prescription' as 'the inconspicuous . . . domination that is unexpectedly already taken over from Dasein as Being-with' (*SZ* 126). I suggest that we interpret this as follows. The *Man*-self is the existentiell mode of Being-oneself in which the only possibilities of oneself – i.e. the only those for-the-sakes-of-whom – that Dasein expressly seizes are those that it takes over from the web of for-the-sakes-of-whom that constitute the horizon of *das Man*. Heidegger calls this Dasein's being 'lost in the publicness of *das Man*' (*SZ* 175), or '*dispersed* into *das Man*' (*SZ* 129). We have already seen that this does not imply that the *Man*-self is a conformist. Nevertheless, it does mean that every for-the-sake-of-whom that the *Man*-self expressly seizes has already been staked out by the web of oppositions, hierarchies, and other relations that constitute the horizon of *das Man*. (Dasein expressly seizes the for-the-sake-of-whom of being a carpenter, for example, when it engages in carpentry – thus allowing the for-the-sake-of-whom of being a carpenter to guide one's practical dealings with the equipment of carpentry.) In particular, Dasein as Being-oneself in the mode of the *Man*-self does not expressly seize the one for-the-sake-of-whom that it cannot take over from *das Man*: its 'ownmost' possibility of dying. Heidegger characterizes this by saying that in the mode of the *Man*-self Dasein 'flees from' (*SZ* 254), 'evades' (*SZ* 259), or 'covers up' (*SZ* 256) its own death. In such 'alienation' (*SZ* 254, 178) from its mortality, the certain possibility of one's own death – precisely because it is an existential – does not go away. For Dasein is *essentially* Being-toward-death (*SZ* 254), whether or not it expressly grasps this possibility. Nevertheless, the unowned *Man*-self acts *as if* it were immortal, and thus infinite (*un-end-lich*). In occluding its ownmost possibility, it fails to encounter its everyday possibilities in terms of the existential horizon of Being-oneself.

Besides the *Man*-self, the other primary existentiell mode of Being-oneself is self-ownership, or 'resoluteness'. As we have already seen, this mode involves expressly grasping the certain and unsurpassable possibility of one's own death. As one's 'ownmost' and 'non-relational' for-the-sake-of-whom, death is the only possibility of oneself that is not intelligible in terms of the network of social roles that makes up the horizon of *das Man*. Thus Heidegger says that the disclosure of death that occurs in self-ownership is at the same time the disclosure of the possibility of Dasein's being 'torn away from *das Man*' (*SZ* 263). Nevertheless, it would be completely mistaken to take Heidegger to be saying that resolute, self-owning Dasein in some way severs its attachments to the world or society:

> Resoluteness as *self-owning Being-oneself* does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate [Dasein] to a free-floating I. And how should it do this – when as self-owning disclosedness it is nothing other than *self-owned Being-in-the-world?* Resoluteness brings the self precisely into appropriately concerned Being at ready-to-hand entities, and pushes it into Being-with that cares for others (*SZ* 298; cf. *SZ* 188, 264, 297 f., 299, 326, 328, 338; *GA* 20: 440).





Thus in expressly grasping one's own death, one does not cease to project the ordinary for-the-sakes-of-whom that one appropriates from *das Man* by projecting them as possibilities of oneself. Nor does one cease to project intraworldly entities upon practical meanings.[47] Heidegger indicates the relation between *das Man* and Dasein's Being-itself in the existentiell mode of self-ownership as follows: '*Self-owned Being-oneself* is not based on a condition of the subject's exemption from *das Man*, but *is an existentiell modification of* das Man *as an essential existential*' (*SZ* 130; cf. 267). The existential horizon of *das Man* provides the for-the-sakes-of-whom that Dasein projects as concrete possibilities of itself – whether or not Dasein has expressly owned them.

The only difference between the two existentiell modes of Being-oneself lies in whether Dasein, in appropriating these possibilities from *das Man*, freely chooses them in the full light of its finitude. The 'existentiell modification' of *das Man* that distinguishes the self-owning self from the *Man*-self can thus be thought of as the all-important *addition* of one's ownmost possibility to the possibilities that one expressly grasps in Being-oneself. Heidegger thus speaks of Dasein's Being-itself in the mode of self-ownership as 'ahead of the *Man*-self' (*SZ* 193). This does not mean that self-owning Dasein has in any sense left the possibilities of *das Man* behind. Instead, as we have seen, it is ahead of these possibilities because it for the first time projects them in the light shed by its expressly grasping its ultimate possibility of dying. Dasein in the self-owning mode of Being-itself thus projects the same concrete possibilities of itself as it does in the mode of the *Man*-self. What is distinctive about the mode of self-ownership is that Dasein for the first time owns up to the existential consequence of doing so imposed by its ownmost possibility of death.[48]

## VII. Conclusion

Situating *das Man*, the *Man*-self, and self-ownership in the context of Dasein's overall ontological structure allows us to see our way out of the impasse in the debate between Dreyfus and Olafson over the status of what they call '*das Man*' in *SZ*. On the interpretation I have suggested here, *das Man* and the *Man*-self must be distinguished. For *das Man* belongs essentially, or existentially, to Dasein's Being. This is because Dasein *always* finds itself thrown into a set of possible for-the-sakes-of-whom, some subset of which it must strive to actualize as itself. Dasein can no more free itself from *das Man* than it can from its world or from its death. The

*Man*-self, on the other hand, is one of the two existentiell modes of the perspective of Being-oneself. Because the *Man*-self is the mode in which all of the expressly grasped possibilities of oneself are appropriated from *das Man*, the *Man*-self is related to the horizon of *das Man*. Nevertheless, the two are distinct phenomena. Recognizing this can allow us to see that the Dreyfus–Olafson debate is largely a *Scheinstreit*, i.e., a pseudo-debate, with both parties 'talking past' the other. Dreyfus tends to use the term 'the one' (i.e. '*das Man*') to refer to the existen*tial* horizon that I characterize by the same name, whereas Olafson tends to use it to refer to the existen*tiell* mode of the *Man*-self. Nevertheless, Dreyfus and Olafson appear to assume that they are talking about more or less the same phenomenon, thus leading to an exaggeration of the substantive differences between their interpretations. Dreyfus's view that *das Man* is a source of meaning that is always in play in Dasein's Being is essentially correct, but only when applied to the existential of *das Man*. And Olafson's view that what he calls '*das Man*' can be overcome in rare moments of self-ownership is also correct, but only when applied to the existentiell of the *Man*-self. The shortcoming of Dreyfus's position is that, in the terms I have used here, he holds that *das Man* is the *only* horizon of Dasein's *Da*. This is not correct, however, since, as I have argued, the *Da* is equioriginarily constituted also by the world and one's own death.[49] The shortcomings of Olafson's reading, on the other hand, are twofold. First, Heidegger's statements about the *Man*-self do not constitute a criticism of contemporary mass culture in particular, but are rather a description of the existentiell mode in which Dasein 'by and large' – and regardless of its culture – enacts itself. More importantly, Olafson fails to emphasize the fact that *all* of the for-the-sakes-of-whom that we project are appropriated from *das Man*, and the fact that this relation is not broken when Dasein takes ownership of itself.

This distinction between *das Man* and the *Man*-self also allows us to make sense of what might otherwise appear to be flat-out contradictions on Heidegger's part. First, and as we saw at the end of section VI, he affirms that self-ownership is an existentiell modification of the existential of *das Man* (*SZ* 130, 267). We have interpreted this to mean that self-ownership and the *Man*-self are the two basic ways of appropriating possible for-the-sakes-of-whom from the horizon of *das Man*. The existential of *das Man* thus has *ontological* priority over the two existentiell modes of Being-oneself. Second, however, Heidegger asserts: 'Unownedness has possible self-ownership as its ground' (*SZ* 259); and: 'The *Man*-self . . . is an existentiell modification of the self-owning self' (*SZ* 317). This second kind of priority is not the *ontological* priority of an existential phenomenon over an existentiell one. Rather, it is the priority of one existentiell phenomenon (self-ownership) over another (the *Man*-self). He explains the nature of this priority as follows:





> Existentielly, the self-ownership of Being-oneself is indeed closed off and repressed in fallenness, but this closedness is only the *privation* of a disclosedness that manifests itself phenomenally in the fact that Dasein's flight is a flight *before* itself. (*SZ* 184)

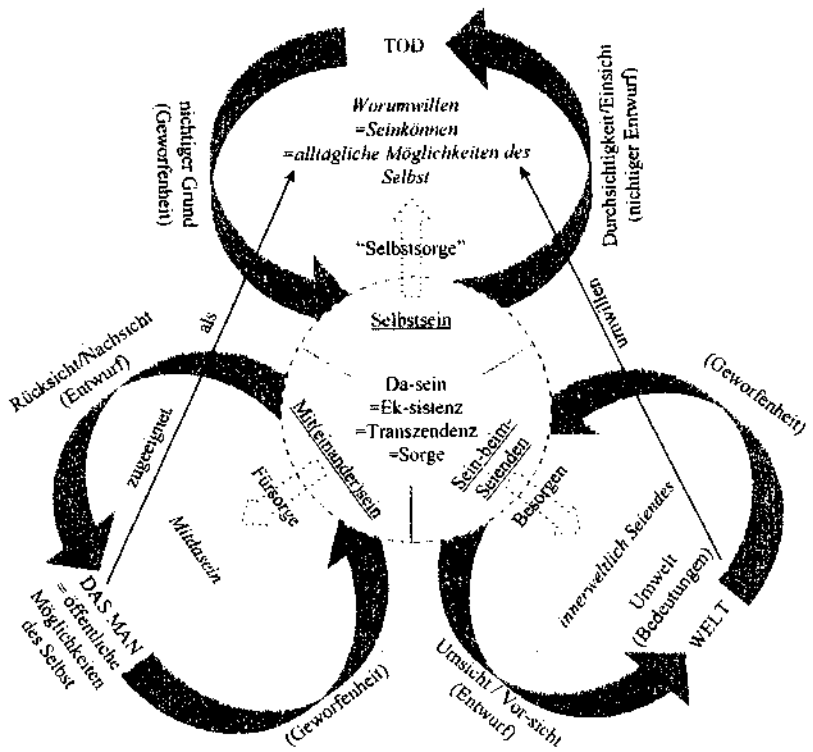
This second kind of priority, I think, is a priority in *definition*. For example, since blindness is just the inability to see in an organism that otherwise could see, sight is prior in definition to blindness. Similarly, since the *Man*-self is just Dasein's existentiell occlusion of a horizon (namely, death) that otherwise could be expressly seized, self-ownership is prior in definition to the *Man*-self. A final kind of priority is priority in time. Heidegger makes it clear that Dasein is by and large in the mode of the *Man*-self. As Joan Stambaugh points out, Dasein is surely not born in a self-owning stance toward death.[50] Rather, experiences of anxiety, and hence opportunities for self-ownership, arise unexpectedly and without warning from one's business with the matters of one's everyday concern. Thus: '*Self-owned* existence is nothing that floats freely above fallen everydayness, but existentially only a modified seizing of it' (*SZ* 179); and characterization of self-ownership as 'the existentiell modification of the *Man*-self into *self-owning* Being-oneself' (*SZ* 268). Dasein's existing in the mode of the *Man*-self is prior in time to its taking ownership of itself.

What light do these considerations shed on the question with which we began, namely, that of the relation of individuals to society? In a nutshell, Heidegger's view is as follows. Relations to society make an essential contribution to the meaning of an individual's life. In particular, the concrete possibilities of ourselves – the social roles we assume, and the occupations we engage in – all get their meaning from the relations in which they stand to other possible ways to be a self. As long as we are human, it is not within our choice to break free of this essential relation to society. For in order to be a self at all, we must always pursue some concrete possibilities that are fully intelligible only against the background of our cultural and historical inheritance. In Heidegger's terms, *das Man*, and hence 'publicness', is one of the existential horizons in terms of which our lives have meaning. Despite the unavoidable dependence of individuals on society, however, our lives as individuals are not played out *exclusively* against this horizon. For the world and our own deaths are horizons of possibility that are just as originary as that of *das Man*. Expressly, or transparently, grasping our own deaths does not sever the ties that bind us to society and its field of meanings. The most that such transparency about our finitude and our freedom can do is to allow us to choose the manner in which we will be dependent on society. To make such a choice is to come to 'own' ourselves: not, as we have seen, as something that we create *ex nihilo*, but as something we fashion from raw materials we find at hand. Heidegger's existential analyses of *das Man*, the *Man*-self, and self-

ownership aim to show how the self must be structured in order for us to be able in this way to take ownership of our lives.

## APPENDIX

Die ontologische Struktur des Daseins




Schlüssel:
*Kursive: begegnendes Seiendes*
Unterstreichung: existentiale Perspektive
GROßSCHRIEBUNG: EXISTENTIALER HORIZONT DES "DA"

## NOTES

1 I have in mind here writings by Robert Brandom, Hubert Dreyfus, John Haugeland, Mark Okrent, and Joseph Rouse.

2 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 16th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), abbreviated hereafter as '*SZ*', followed by the page number. Heidegger's works published in his *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975 ff.) are cited as '*GA*', followed by the volume number, a colon, and the page number. In the case of multiple editions, I have used exclusively the most recent editions as of 1994. All translations are my own.

3 'The one' is probably the most grammatically precise translation of '*das Man*', but gives the unfortunate impression of being some mysterious, otherworldly force or entity, such as Hegel's *Geist* is sometimes thought to be. 'The they' fits a colloquial idiom, but leaves open the false impression that *das Man* does not imply oneself, but only others (i.e. 'them'). And 'the anyone' has the advantage that it does not exclude oneself from *das Man*. Nevertheless, it has the disadvantage that 'anyone' is not grammatically parallel to the German pronoun '*man*'; for it cannot be entirely idiomatically substituted for 'one' and 'they' in such English expressions as the two examples in the text above.

4 Relevant texts are (in chronological order): Olafson's initial discussion of *das Man* in his *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 144–50; Hubert L. Dreyfus's criticism of Olafson's interpretation in *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 141–62; Olafson's implicit response to Dreyfus in *What is a Human Being?: A Heideggerian View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 6; and Olafson's explicit response to Dreyfus in 'Heidegger *à la* Wittgenstein or 'Coping' with Professor Dreyfus', *Inquiry* 37 (1994), pp. 45–64; Taylor Carman's expansion and defense of Dreyfus's position in 'On Being Social: A Reply to Olafson', *Inquiry* 37 (1994), pp. 203–23; Olafson's criticism of Carman's interpretation of Dasein as *das Man* in 'Individualism, Subjectivity, and Presence: A Response to Taylor Carman', *Inquiry* 37 (1994), pp. 331–7; Dreyfus's own defense of his position against Olafson's criticism in 'Interpreting Heidegger on *Das Man*', *Inquiry* 38 (1995), pp. 423–30; Olafson's counter-attack against Dreyfus in *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of 'Mitsein'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. pp. 26 f., 35–39; and the overview of the debate in Pierre Keller and David Weberman, 'Heidegger and the Source(s) of Intelligibility', *Continental Philosophy Review* 31 (1998), pp. 369–86. Most recently, Herman Philipse has argued that Heidegger's views of *das Man* and authenticity pull in such opposed directions that they are simply incoherent; see his *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 26–28, 346–74); and 'Heidegger and Ethics', *Inquiry* 42 (1999), pp. 429–74, esp. pp. 447–61. I argue here that the impasse between Olafson and Dreyfus, as well as the incoherence that Philipse claims to see, both result from a failure to distinguish between *das Man* and the *Man*-self. I agree in large part with Keller's and Weberman's general conclusions, and especially with their suggestion that *das Man* may be different from the *Man*-self (ibid., pp. 377 f.), in which they follow suggestions made by Charles Guignon, 'Heidegger's "Authenticity" Revisited', *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (1984), pp. 321–39, esp. pp. 229 f.

5 Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, op. cit., p. 156; p. 161; p. 353, n. 13.

6 'Self-ownership' is my translation of Heidegger's term '*Eigentlichkeit*', canonically rendered as 'authenticity'. For an explanation and defense of my translation, see Sections V and VI below, esp. note 35.

7 Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, op. cit., pp. 333 f.

8 Olafson, 'Heidegger à la Wittgenstein or "Coping" with Professor Dreyfus', op. cit., p. 58.

9 Ibid.

10 See *SZ* 12 f. for Heidegger's distinction between 'existential' and 'existentiell'.

11 No doubt occasioned by Heidegger's own lack of consistency in *SZ*, there has been a considerable amount of disagreement among commentators as to how to identify this moment of Dasein's Being. Some hold that it is articulation (*Rede*), others hold that it is falling (*Verfallen*), while still others hold that it is Dasein's Being-at-intraworldly-entities (*Sein-beim-innerweltlich-Seienden*). I suggest the following interpretation of these three construals of this moment of Dasein's Being, each of which has its textual support. First, Heidegger sometimes identifies this moment with articulation (e.g. *SZ* 133, 160 f.; cf. 349) because all of Dasein's basic encounters with entities are interpretive, and thus involve taking an entity as having a meaning. In this sense, all such encounters are 'articulated', i.e., characterized by a simultaneous holding the encountered entity 'together' with its meaning, while at the same time separating the entity 'from' its meaning in such a way that the two are not identified (cf. *SZ* 159, 161). Second, Heidegger sometimes identifies this moment with falling (e.g. *SZ* 191, 222 f., 328, 346, 350) because falling is characterized by Dasein's

exclusive concern with the entities that it can encounter – as opposed to death, Dasein's ownmost possibility (see sections V and VI below). Third, Heidegger sometimes identifies this moment with Being-at-intraworldly-entities (e.g. *SZ* 192 f., 328; cf. 326) because this is the *kind* of encounter of entities to which Heidegger devotes the most attention in *SZ*, especially in Division One. (See section III below for a discussion of the other kinds of encounters with entities.) On this point, I am basically in agreement with F.-W. von Herrmann, *Subjekt und Dasein*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985), pp. 198–224; and Thomas Sheehan, 'Heidegger's New Aspect; On *In-Sein*, *Zeitlichkeit* and *The Genesis of "Being and Time"*', *Research in Phenomenology* 25 (1995), pp. 211–22.

12 This sort of referential meaningfulness has been well characterized by both Dreyfus (*Being-in-the-World*, op. cit., pp. 88–107) and Olafson (*Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind*, op. cit., pp. 39–45).

13 What can be expressly seized includes a scientific task (*SZ* 13, 38, 86, 153, 332, 393), a practical possibility (*SZ* 194), or Dasein's mortal finitude (*SZ* 86, 122, 129, 146, 179, 188, 268, 291, 299, 326, 383, 384; cf. 12, 144, 173, 342). To seize a possibility is to do so expressly (*eigens*; cf. *SZ* 122, 129, 268, 332), i.e. explicitly (*ausdrücklich*; cf. *SZ* 86, 268).

14 Cf. 'Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit', in *Gelassenheit* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), pp. 36–38.

15 *GA* 26: 169–71, 177, 184; *GA* 9: 137–42, 163–75.

16 *GA* 63: 7; GA 65: 296. See also Heidegger's *Der Begriff der Zeit* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 11.

17 Heidegger's term is '*Mitdasein*'. Other Daseins are 'not only entirely different from equipment and things, but are, according to their way of Being *as Dasein*, themselves "in" the world in the manner of Being in the world in which they are at the same time encountered in an intraworldly manner. These entities are neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand, but rather are *like* Dasein itself; they are *also there and there with [Dasein]*' (*SZ* 118).

18 'Perspective' is not a term that Heidegger uses in this way in *SZ*. For a rather later (1939) discussion of the relation of a perspective to a horizon, see 'Der Wille zur Macht als Erkenntnis' (*Nietzsche I*: Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), pp. 574, 624. Although Heidegger hints at such a picture already in 1928 (cf. *GA* 26: 266), he never quite makes this explicit in his works from the *SZ* period. Instead, he tends during this period to think of horizons as correlative with a particular temporal 'ecstasy', i.e. a 'rapture', 'direction', or 'dimension' (*SZ* 365; *GA* 24: 378; *GA* 26: 269; 'Zeit und Sein' in *Zur Sache des Denkens* [Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969], pp. 15–17). I think, however, that this is highly misleading. As I will suggest in this section, although each *perspective* has a single corresponding horizon, all three moments of Dasein's Being (encountering entities, projection, and thrownness) are in fact involved in the disclosure of a particular horizon from the corresponding perspective. And because each such moment of Dasein's Being has a particular temporal ecstasy as its sense, all three ecstasies are involved together in the disclosure of each such horizon of possibilities.

19 *SZ* 193, 54 f. 'Being-at' is, I think, the best English translation of Heidegger's '*Sein-bei*'. Macquarrie and Robinson's 'Being-alongside' is clearly misleading, for it suggests merely spatial proximity, instead of the practical involvement that Heidegger intends for this term to connote. Such suggestions as 'Being-amidst' and 'Being-among' face similar difficulties. Theodore Kisiel's 'Being-with' is somewhat better, although it is rather vague, and could be too easily misconstrued as exclusively restricted to interpersonal relations. I prefer 'Being-at', understood *not* in terms of something's merely physical location (e.g. being *at* 65 degrees north latitude and 70 degrees east longitude), but rather in one of two other senses. First, we can say that someone is *at* an activity, such as their being 'at work', 'at play', or simply 'at it again'. Second, we can say that someone is *at* almost any machine that they are both skilled in operating, and at the moment are at least attempting to use properly, such as when we say that someone is 'at the helm', 'at the wheel of the car', 'at the controls', 'at the computer', etc. These two kinds of uses of 'at' precisely *lack* the connotations of mere physical location that plague 'alongside', 'amidst', 'among', or 'among'. A further strength of this translation is the fact that both such uses have direct





parallels with the German '*bei*', such as someone's being '*beim Hämmern*' (*SZ* 84) or '*bei der Arbeit*' (*SZ* 120).

20 Most, if not all, of these aspects of a horizon can be found in Husserl's concept of a phenomenological horizon. In roughly chronological order, some of Husserl's most important discussions of horizons can be found at *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Band I, 2. Auflage* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1922), pp. 164 f., 293; *Erfahrung und Urteil* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1985), pp. 27–30; *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis* (Husserliana, Band XI), ed. Margot Fleischer (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 6–12, 51–67, 202, 261; *Erste Philosophie (1923/24), Zweiter Teil: Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion* (Husserliana, Band VIII), ed. Rudolf Boehm (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1959), pp. 146–52; *Cartesianische Meditationen* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1987), pp. 24, 45–47, 62 f.; *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp. 149, 162, 168.

21 For Heidegger's discussion of the concept of horizon, see (in chronological order) *SZ* 365 f.; *GA* 24: 356 f., 378 f., 428 f.; *GA* 26: 269, 272; *GA* 9: 165. See also F.-W. von Herrmann, *Subjekt und Dasein* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985), pp. 92 f., 118 f.

22 Heidegger explicitly refers to the world as a horizon several times throughout the *SZ* period, speaking, for example, of 'the horizon of a disclosed world' at *SZ* 268; cf. also *GA* 9: 165; *GA* 26: 275. My use of the term 'world' in the relatively restricted sense of the horizon only of *practical* meanings, however, will no doubt be somewhat controversial. For there are surely texts composed shortly after *SZ* (published in 1927) in which Heidegger uses 'world' to encompass the *total* horizon of *all* possibilities disclosed to Dasein, i.e. what in *SZ* is called the '*Da*'. In 1928, for example, he writes that 'the world, primarily characterized by the for-the-sake-of-whom, is the originary totality of what Dasein as free gives itself to understand' (*GA* 26: 247; cf. 272–5; cf. also *GA* 9: 155–67, esp. 163). In *SZ*, however, Heidegger appears to use the term 'world' with a considerably more limited scope, as I do here. I know of no instance in *SZ* where he unambiguously uses the term 'world' in the broad sense. And his official definition of 'world' – '*the within-which of self-referring understanding, as the upon-which of its allowing entities to be encountered in the way of Being of usefulness*' (*SZ* 86) – surely applies better to the narrow sense of 'world' than to the broad one. For this reason, I think that the best way to read Heidegger on this issue is that in 1927 he employs 'world' to characterize the horizon of the totality of possible use-meanings, whereas in 1928 he expands the scope of this term to characterize the totality of possibilities per se.

23 We will see in section VI that there is a sense in which Dasein can experience the world as a totality. This occurs in the mood of anxiety. For our purposes, all that is needed to note here that in anxiety Dasein experiences the possibilities that make up its world as *mere* 'potential possibilities' – i.e. as things it *could* do – and not as already actualized possibilities.

24 Heidegger notes that Dasein 'by and large' (*SZ* 125) encounters others in its everyday practical dealings with intraworldly entities (*SZ* 125). Others, for example, are both potential users of the fruits of Dasein's labors, and also co-workers with whom Dasein co-operates on joint practical projects (*SZ* 116–18, 126; cf. 70 f.). For this reason, he calls a Dasein's world a 'co-world' (*Mitwelt*; *SZ* 118). Heidegger notes that 'for purposes of simplifying the explication' he does not emphasize the social character of the world in his preceding discussion of world (*SZ* 118; cf. *GA* 20: 326 f.; *GA* 21: 235).

25 This is not to *identify* all for-the-sakes-of which as such with social roles or social statuses. On this issue, see Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, pp. 94–96; and William Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 83–85.

26 This is the basis of his criticism of traditional views of the self, such as those of Descartes (*SZ* 24 f.), Kant (*SZ* 24, 320 f.; *GA* 21: 406; *GA* 24: 209), and Husserl (cf. *GA* 17: 80 f.; *GA* 20: 155 f., 165). Heidegger holds that such views are based on the mistake of illegitimately applying what is the case for innerworldly entities to other ways of Being, such as the self. Such over-generalizations have led to conceiving the self as a certain kind of thing (a subject) which has the possibility of standing in certain epistemic or other intentional relations to other kinds of things (objects; *SZ* 114, 117).

27 '*Das Sein*, darum *es diesem Seienden in seinem Sein geht, ist je meines*' (*SZ* 42; cf. *SZ* 12, 84).

28 As Heidegger notes (*GA* 9: 157; *GA* 26: 239 f., 245), this does not commit him to a form of psychological egoism (and certainly not to an ethical egoism). For such egoistic theories generally hold that the *pleasure* of the agent is (or ought to be) the ultimate goal of someone's actions. Heidegger, however, does not hold that any kind of actual or anticipated pleasure is a necessary component of pursuing a for-the-sake-of-whom. In fact, his position is compatible with there being entirely selfless or altruistic possibilities of ourselves for the sake of whom we act. For example, I can do something for someone else for the sake of myself as a martyr, a disciple, a care-giver, a citizen bound by the patriotic duty to aid my country, or simply as an ethical person.

29 See, e.g., Thomas Sheehan, 'Martin Heidegger', in Edward Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1998), vol. 4, pp. 311 f.; William Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, op. cit., pp. 59–63.

30 See, e.g., F.-W. von Herrmann, *Subjekt und Dasein*, op. cit., *passim*.

31 In his writings from 1919 through 1921, Heidegger called what is in *SZ* simply the world the 'environment' (*Umwelt*), the ontic horizon of others the 'co-world' ('*Mitwelt*'), and the ontic horizon of the self the 'self-world' ('*Selbstwelt*'; cf. *GA* 58: 43–104; *GA* 60: 11, 13; *GA* 9: 30). By 1925, however, he had rejected such terminology as misleading (cf. *GA* 20: 333), adopting instead the terms of *SZ*. According to this new terminology, each Dasein lives in only one world, although this is but one of the three horizons of the disclosed *Da* (cf. *SZ* 365). Heidegger modified his terminology in this way *not* because he thought that his original division was wrong, but rather because he came to hold that the term 'world' is best applied only to the horizon of practical activity. 'It is true that the worldly ability to encounter Dasein and co-Dasein is constitutive for the Being-in-the-world of Dasein and thus for that of others, but it never thereby becomes something worldly. . . The world itself, on the other hand, is never co-there, never co-Dasein; rather, it is that in which Dasein always is as concern' (*GA* 20: 333 f.). Further textual evidence for my thesis that Heidegger by *SZ* holds that Dasein exists simultaneously and equioriginarily in these three perspectives can be found in *SZ* itself. For example, Heidegger enumerates Dasein's 'essential relations' as 'Being at the world (concern), Being-with (caring-for), and Being-oneself (who)' (*SZ* 131; see the similar enumerations at *SZ* 114, 181, 263, 298; *GA* 24: 427 f., 418–23). Along the same lines, he writes: '*Caring-for* proves to be a constitution of Dasein's Being that is, according to its different possibilities, *linked* [*verklammert*] to [Dasein's] *Being to the world* with which it is concerned, just as with its owning *Being to itself*' (*SZ* 122; emphasis added). Any lingering doubts as to whether Heidegger by the time of *SZ* still held that there are three perspectives of Dasein's Being can, I think, be put to rest by a statement he made in a lecture-course held less than two years after the publication of *SZ*. Here, he writes that from his ontological analysis 'it has already become clear that Dasein is equioriginarily always already Being at, Being-with, and Being-itself' (*GA* 27: 148; cf. *GA* 9: 163).

32 Heidegger rejects the term 'self-care' on the grounds that it is tautological (*SZ* 193, 318).

33 See sections V and VI below.

34 See Heidegger's analysis of the death of others, and his differentiation from the experience of one's own death, at *SZ* 237–41.

35 The canonical translation of Heidegger's neologism '*Eigentlichkeit*' is 'authenticity'. This, however, is highly misleading. For it wrongly suggests that an *eigentliches* self is one that is actualizing a concrete possibility of itself that is in some sense its 'real' self, as when we speak of finding one's goal in life, one's true calling, etc. In fact, however, an 'authentic' self in this sense plays no role in Heidegger's concept of authenticity. For, as I will argue in this section, one can be *eigentlich* only if one makes a *radical* choice of who to be, and thus a choice that receives no guidance from any fixed possibility of oneself, including a putative 'real self'. I think that 'self-ownership' captures Heidegger's meaning better than 'authentic'. This translation is not, however, without its own difficulties. How, for example, should we translate Heidegger's term for the opposed existentiell mode of Being-oneself, '*Uneigentlichkeit*', and its corresponding adjective, '*uneigentlich*'? For 'lack-of-self-ownership', 'non-self-ownership', 'without owning itself'; and the like are highly awkward;





and 'self-disownership' would be positively misleading, since it wrongly suggests that *uneigentliches* Dasein somehow *chooses* to be so. My choice of the following terminology is based primarily on stylistic considerations: I use 'owned' and 'owning' (with the prefix 'self-' elided) equivalently as translations of the adjective '*eigentlich*'; 'unownedness' or 'unowningness' as the translation of the substantive '*Uneigentlichkeit*'; and 'unowned' or 'unowning' to translate '*uneigentlich*'.

36 It is crucial to recognize that this is *only* an analogy, or, as Heidegger calls it, a 'formalization' (*SZ* 283). Heidegger rightly stresses that self-ownership is not a value, and certainly not a moral one (*SZ* 167, 176, 293; cf. 289–95). Perhaps the only way in which self-ownership is unambiguously valuable is in serving as the basis for an ontological investigation for how the self is.

37 'Being anxious discloses originarily and directly the world as world' (*SZ* 187), where the world, as we have seen, is the totality of practical possibilities. 'What stifles [in anxiety] is not this or that, but also not everything present-at-hand as a sum, but rather the *possibility* of the ready-to-hand in general, i.e. the world itself' (*SZ* 187). 'With the about-which of being anxious, anxiety thus discloses Dasein *as being-possible*' (*SZ* 187 f.). 'Anxiety manifests in Dasein . . . *being free for* the freedom of choosing and grasping oneself' (*SZ* 188). Thus in anxiety, 'the world is *still* and *more demandingly* "there" ["*da*"]' (*SZ* 189) than it is in other, more everyday, moods.

38 Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, n.d.), p. 100.

39 This passage has been read by several prominent commentators as committing Heidegger to the problematic doctrine of ethical decisionism, i.e. – roughly, and in an extreme form – the view that an action as performed by an agent is ethical if and only if that agent decides to do it. This interpretation, however, rests on the assumption that Heidegger offers his account of self-ownership as an account of morality. This is simply mistaken. For Heidegger to point out formal similarities between conscience, owing, negativity, and responsibility in the moral and existential spheres entails neither that the corresponding moral and existential phenomena are identical, nor that every action undertaken by resolute Dasein is *ipso facto* moral. Heidegger's two strongest statements about the relation between self-ownership and morality are probably the following: 'An entity whose Being is care can not only laden itself with what it factically owes, but *is* owing in the ground of its Being. This Being-owing provides for the first time the ontological condition for factically existing Dasein's ability to owe. This essential Being-owing is equioriginarily the existential condition of the possibility for the "morally" good and evil, i.e. for morality in general and its factically possible variations. Originary Being-owing cannot be determined by morality, because the latter already presupposes the former for itself' (*SZ* 286). '*Willing-to-have-conscience is rather the most originary existentiell presupposition for the possibility of becoming factically owing*. In understanding the call, Dasein allows its ownmost self to *act in itself* from out of its chosen ability-to-be. Only so can it *be* responsibly' (*SZ* 288). Even these two passages – in which Heidegger may well be overstating his case for the sake of emphasis – do not entail moral decisionism. For here Heidegger here appears only to claim that taking complete moral responsibility for oneself entails, or presupposes, taking resolute ownership of oneself. Now it is true that the *converse* of this claim – i.e. that taking resolute ownership of oneself implies that one is acting morally – would come very close to ethical decisionism. Neither these passages, however, nor Heidegger's general view of the relation between moral and existential responsibility, commits him to this converse claim. For a thoughtful discussion of these issues, see Lawrence Vogel, *The Fragile 'We': Ethical Implications of Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994).

40 Although Heidegger does not to my knowledge explicitly call death the 'horizon' of the perspective of Being-oneself, he does characterize it with the virtually identical spatial metaphor of one thing lying before another [*einem anderen vorgelagert sein*]. He writes: 'Dasein as Being toward its death is always related to the outermost not-yet of itself, which all others lie before [*vorgelagert sind*; perhaps better: 'which lies in store behind all others'] (*SZ* 259). Reversing this spatial metaphor – but in a way still compatible with

understanding death as a horizon – he writes: 'resoluteness . . . projects itself . . . upon the outermost possibility, which lies before [*vorgelagert ist*] all of Dasein's factical abilities-to-be' (*SZ* 302).

41 See note 13 above.

42 Heidegger explains that a full 'description and classification' of the various modes of Being-with-others 'lies beyond the limits of this investigation' (*SZ* 122). He lists instead only the 'two extreme possibilities' of 'caring-for with respect to its positive modes'. These modes are positive in contradistinction to such 'deficient or at least indifferent modes' (*SZ* 124; cf. 121). Examples of the latter include 'being-without-each-other, going-past-each-other, not-being-concerned-with-each-other' (*SZ* 121), 'distance and reserve' (*SZ* 122), and perhaps also the mode in which 'the other is at first "there" [*"da"*] from what one [*man*] has heard of him, what one [*man*] says and knows about him' (*SZ* 174). The first extreme positive mode of Being-with-others is 'leaping in' for the other. In this mode, one Dasein 'dominates' the other by 'taking away' the 'care' of its co-Dasein and taking over its concern. The second extreme positive mode of Being-with-others is 'leaping ahead' of the other: here, the one Dasein somehow 'frees' the other by 'giving "care" back' to its co-Dasein, and thereby 'sets the other free in his freedom for himself' (*SZ* 122). In the first extreme positive (existentiell) mode of Being-with-others, it would appear that Dasein treats other people at best in terms of *itself* and its worldly projects. In the second extreme positive (existentiell) mode of Being-with-others, however, Dasein would appear to treat others in terms of their proper horizon – *das Man* and perhaps also the other's own death – thus encountering the others in terms of their *own* self-projects and the correlative worldly dealings that they guide.

43 Cf., e.g., *SZ* 42–44, 129 f., 175–80, 259.

44 Dreyfus appears to equate such averageness with conformism, at least in what he calls its 'motivational', or 'existentiell' sense; see his *Being-in-the-World*, op. cit., pp. 144, 157, 227.

45 Taylor Carman's interpretation of *das Man* in 'On Being Social: A Reply to Olafson', op. cit. approaches such an extreme claim. See Olafson, 'Individuality, Subjectivity, and Presence: A Reply to Taylor Carman', op. cit., for a convincing rebuttal.

46 There is admittedly some textual difficulty with applying this interpretation consistently to everything that Heidegger says. One source of this difficulty lies in the fact that the term '*Man*-self' is first introduced only at *SZ* 129. And up to this point (e.g. at *SZ* 114, 127 f.), Heidegger used the term '*das Man*' to characterize what he more strictly terms 'the *Man*-self'. Even more problematically, he never makes the distinction entirely explicit. Nevertheless, in *SZ* after this point (e.g. *SZ* 193, 263, 266, 268, 272–4), he distinguishes fairly consistently between them. Perhaps, then, such uses of the terms are transitional, employed as Heidegger moves from an analysis of *das Man* to that of the everyday mode of Dasein's Being-itself. In the end, though, it may well be the case that the distinction between *das Man* and the *Man*-self may simply not have been so clear to him that they consistently impressed themselves on his terminology. After all, I suggest this interpretation not with the aim of trying to show that every sentence of *SZ* is entirely correct as it stands, or that it coheres with every other sentence in the work. Rather, I do so in the spirit of trying to bring to light as sharply as possible the issues (*Sachen*) of Heidegger's phenomenological analyses.

47 Failure to distinguish anxious indecision from resolute self-standing can give rise to the suspicion that Heidegger holds that the resolute self ceases to deal interestedly with innerworldly entities or other people. Now it is true that the experience in anxiety of possibilities as *mere* possibilities renders innerworldly entities 'entirely unimportant' (*SZ* 187), 'in general not "relevant", . . ., without significance [and as having] the character of complete meaninglessness' (*SZ* 186, 343). Nevertheless, we have seen that anxiety is only a necessary *precursor* of resolute self-ownership. In the latter existentiell mode, one returns to one's interested engagement with innerworldly entities and with others, but with the essential difference that one now for the first time takes ownership of these possibilities.

48 It should be clear that the interpretation I have suggested of self-ownership differs from a prevalent interpretation of this phenomenon, which one finds, for example, in Charles Guignon, 'Heidegger's "Authenticity" Revisited', *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (1984), pp. 321–39, esp. p. 334. On this view, self-ownership is a matter of developing a personal style – a particular way of combining the possibilities into which one finds oneself thrown to form 'a pattern that is coherent and integrated' (p. 332), and hence to develop a unique personality. I do not think that this reading is correct, since what is distinctive about a self that owns itself has nothing to do with *which* concrete possibilities it projects – including the 'coherence and focus' with which it may do so; see Guignon, 'History and Commitment in the Early Heidegger', in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), p. 136. Instead, it has exclusively to do with their being radically chosen in the transparency of the full existential implications of doing so.

49 Dreyfus has a second criticism of Heidegger's view of self-ownership. He claims that Heidegger cannot explain the psychological motivation for Dasein's falling from self-ownership into unownedness. Dreyfus views self-ownership as nothing more than the 'understanding that no specific project can fulfill me or give my life meaning' (*Being-in-the-World*, pp. 322 f.), and the pursuit of which will guarantee a stable, 'ultimate or intrinsic meaning' (ibid., p. 323) in one's life. He views fallenness into unownedness, accordingly, as what Sartre calls 'bad faith': the stubborn pursuit of some particular for-the-sakes-of-whom as essentially one's own. The basis of Dreyfus's criticism of Heidegger is that he offers no account for Dasein's alleged desire for stable meaning. Although much is valuable in Dreyfus's discussion, his account crucially downplays the role of radical *choice* in anxiety and self-ownership. In particular, what makes Dasein anxious is not just the realization that there is no particular everyday for-the-sake-of-whom that I *must* pursue, but also that in order to be a self, I *must* commit myself to *some* particular set of for-the-sakes-of-whom, and that such commitment precludes the possibility of committing myself to other such projects. Dreyfus, on the other hand, appears to view self-ownership as a matter of developing an easy-going attitude in which one 'goes with the flow' of the unpredictable vagaries of the situation. Dreyfus's account thus omits the crucial aspect of radical choice in anxiety. This is an important omission, since although the situation is for Heidegger the 'reservoir' of possible for-the-sakes-of-whom from which Dasein must choose, it imposes *no* particular for-the-sakes-of-whom *by itself*, i.e. without Dasein's resolute choice. It is precisely this lack of determination of who to be that makes anxiety so unbearably unpleasant. Since, as we saw in section V, anxiety is a necessary condition for taking ownership of oneself, the desire to avoid it supplies the motivation for Dasein's avoiding taking ownership of itself missing in Dreyfus's interpretation. For a criticism of Dreyfus's interpretation along these lines, see Elizabeth Ewing, 'Authenticity in Heidegger: A Response to Dreyfus', *Inquiry* 38 (1995), pp. 469–87.

50 Joan Stambaugh, 'An Inquiry into Authenticity and Inauthenticity in *Being and Time*', *Research in Phenomenology* 7 (1977), p. 156.

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## Lecture 10

# Heidegger on the Relation of Oneself to Oneself, III: Choosing Oneself

I will continue immediately from the point at the end of the last lecture where I had to interrupt the interpretation of the second aspect of the relation of oneself to oneself, namely, the relation to one's own being as the for-the-sake-of-which and possibility. I wanted to explain the terms that are fundamental for Heidegger's account of this side of the relation of oneself to one's own being in the following sequence: *for-the-sake-of-which*, *possibility*, *understanding*, *projection*, and *meaning*. We are still concerned with the second of these terms. I claimed that there are two reasons why Heidegger designates the activities in which man concretely carries out his being as possibilities. First, he wanted to underline the range of freedom that pertains to our activity on the basis of the yes/no polarity of our understanding. We then saw that this is connected to the further thesis that we can only relate ourselves to our being as something impending because we relate ourselves to our actions as possibilities of action and to our being as potentiality-for-being; and it is only on this basis that a consciousness of the future emerges.

The second reason for Heidegger's choice of the term *possibility* is still to be identified. I have already pointed out that Heidegger neglected to elucidate the traditional concepts for the volitional self-relation by means of his elaboration of the relation of oneself to oneself because he wanted to separate himself as sharply as possible from the tradition. The choice of the term *possibility* for the concrete units in which Dasein carries out its being seems to me to be an expression of this neglect.





On the one hand, the choice of this term undoubtedly has the positive significance of emphasizing that the person relates himself to himself in his activities, since these are designated as possibilities of being. In this way the connection of the basic units in which one's own being is concretized with the global unit of existence is secured, but the characterization of the basic units as possibilities leaves their descriptive character completely indeterminate. The question of how these possibilities are to be understood concretely—for instance, as actions, connections of actions, activities, and roles—is left open, and the choice of the term *possibility* somewhat obscures this fact.

The three remaining terms—*understanding*, *projection*, and *meaning*—can be explained in connection with one another. *Understanding* stands for the specific disclosure of one's own being as possible-being. The best possible mode of access to what Heidegger means by *understanding* seems to me to be the connection between understanding and meaning, although Heidegger himself does not introduce the concept of understanding in this way. I pointed out earlier that we use the expressions *understanding* and *meaning* correlatively and that one must distinguish between the understanding and meaning of linguistic expressions and the understanding of the meaning of an action. Meaning in this second sense (really the primary sense as indicated earlier) signifies the same thing as purpose and end. Understanding an action means understanding its meaning, and this means understanding its purpose. We understand a thing that was deliberately produced when we understand its function—its purpose—and this involves knowing what end it serves, and how one has to use it in order to attain this. We understand a person when we correctly grasp the intentions of his action, the interconnection of his motives for acting.

We have already seen that Heidegger does not clearly distinguish this understanding of meaning from the understanding of linguistic meaning. This is connected to the fact that he makes excessive claims for the concepts of understanding and meaning. Thus he advances the thesis that "all sight is grounded primarily in understanding" (p. 187), and that meaning is the focal point "in terms of which anything becomes intelligible as something" (193). This also led Heidegger to neglect the specifically practical, volitional aspect of *meaning*. We will have to disregard these excessive claims and this illicit shift in the concept of meaning.

The understanding of intentions as I have just described it is a mode of knowledge. I understand an action, a person, a thing, when I know the purpose that the action has or the end that the thing serves. The volitional aspect here belongs, not to the act of understanding, but to the object of understanding.

But Heidegger wants the word *understanding* to be grasped in such a way that it stands for the disclosure of one's own possible-being. Just as a specific disclosure of one's own being in emotions and moods was elaborated under the title "temperament," so the specific mode of disclosure that pertains to willing itself is now to be presented under the title "understanding." Thus, a kind of understanding is at issue for which it is constitutive that it is understanding in the first person. Heidegger describes three aspects of such an understanding that pertain to potentiality-for-being, although he does not himself distinguish between these aspects.

As to the first aspect, when I myself do something, we would not normally say that I understand the intention. This is connected with the epistemic asymmetry of "$\phi$" predicates. I do not first have to interpret a form of behavior in order to know what intention *I* am pursuing. In acting I pursue the intention, and I do not first have to apprehend it. But we have now seen that the intention or purpose guides the action, so to speak; the action would lack orientation in its absence. And this can be regarded as a first form of the disclosure that pertains to the action itself.

Heidegger takes recourse here to another mode of use of the word *understanding*: "We sometimes use . . . the expression 'understand something' in the sense of 'being able to manage something', 'being a match for it', 'being able to do something' " (183). Heidegger even uses this phrase to introduce the concept of understanding. He thinks that through this connection of the use of "understanding how to do something" and "being able to do something" he can make understanding plausible as the mode of disclosure that is constitutive for possibilities of action. But here his deficient analysis of the concepts of possibility had unfavorable consequences. The "can" that is used when we say "someone can do something" obviously stands for the "can" of ability and not for the "can" of the possibility of action. Nonetheless, Heidegger seems to me to have seen something correct here. I just pointed out that we understand a thing that has a function when we know how it is used. But one can only demonstrate this





knowledge and (if necessary) convey it to others by actually dealing with the thing correctly. And this way of dealing with things requires a specific disclosure. Heidegger designates it as circumspection. In English and the Romance languages one can use the word *know* in place of the word *can* when it has this sense, for example, "I know how to drive" in place of "I can drive." The specific disclosure that directs the activity itself, which Heidegger called circumspection, was later identified and analyzed by G. Ryle as "knowing how." It is not limited to the correct way of dealing with a thing. Rather, we also speak of a circumspect mode of behavior in a situation of action—and Heidegger tries to take this into account (cf. BT, p. 373). To be sure, Heidegger did not analyze this phenomenon more closely, and it is doubtful whether he even would have been able to elucidate the understanding of a thing more precisely without the concept of a rule.

I turn now to the second aspect. In the preceding account the disclosure that guides the action was considered only in the context of determinate and particular ends of action. Now we have already seen in connection with the interpretation of moods that a being that volitionally relates itself to its own being depends upon finding a meaning for its life if its will is not to fall into a void. Thus it is now not only the meaning of an individual action that is involved but also the meaning of life; here *meaning* implies something like a conception of life on whose basis one can understand oneself in one's willing and doing. Heidegger considers this aspect right at the beginning of his exposition; after he has alluded to the use of the expression *understand something* in the sense of "being able to do something," he continues: "In understanding as an *existentiale*, that of which we are able is not a what, but being as existing" (p. 183). The unfortunate mixture of the two meanings of *can* is retained in this sentence; in addition, it seems unclear how one is supposed to be able to apply the idea of "knowing how" to existing as such. The characterization of understanding as "projection" that subsequently follows is more illuminating (185). For Heidegger, *projecting* means understanding oneself in terms of a conception of life. The thing that is projected is meaning (193). The concept of projection suggests the view that man creates his conception of life himself, but what is meant is only that this conception must be posited in one way or another; we have no volitional ends that are predetermined by nature, because we relate ourselves to our being. Since as Heidegger says the projection is also always thrown

(BT, p. 315) or pregiven, we actually find ourselves in the context of socially pregiven conceptions of life to an extent that obviously varies according to the historical situation. With this statement I am touching upon a social problematic that Heidegger completely neglects. Of course, he does analyze being-with others, and he also analyzes the dependence of one's self-understanding upon what most people consider correct under the title of the "they" (*das Man*). But his analysis lacks a proper appreciation of social and institutional interconnections, and the roles that are determined on this basis; and it is doubtful whether understanding oneself in terms of a conception of life is even conceivable outside these social interconnections. This is one of the points in Heidegger that refer us to the interpretation of Mead.

Heidegger assigns still another meaning of the word *understanding* to this projective aspect of understanding by virtue of which I understand myself in terms of a meaning (although he does not do so explicitly). He says that in understanding Dasein "knows" "how things stand with itself, i.e. with its potentiality-for-being" (184). He thereby alludes to a meaning of *understanding* in terms of which one can say "I understand myself as the so-and-so." We have already encountered this aspect, since it has been repeatedly shown that the question of how I decide about my potentiality-for-being is decisive for the issue of who I am. At a first level *who* can simply mean the social role that I have, for example, I understand myself as an auto mechanic, as a father of a family, and so on; but on a broader level *who* can also mean the kind of person I am.

Let me recapitulate. When the word *understanding* is intended in the sense of understanding actions, persons, and things, we normally use it in such a way that it does not refer to ourselves; and here understanding is a completely normal (if nonetheless distinctive) kind of knowledge. Heidegger wants to use the word *understanding* in a partly unconventional sense to designate the disclosure that belongs to willing and to deliberative activity itself. We have now become familiar with two aspects of this disclosure. In the first case the word *understanding* cannot be used in such a way that it is related to meaning; rather, it refers to understanding how to do something. Furthermore, a disclosure of *oneself* is still not at issue here, but only the circumspect execution of an action. An understanding of oneself is clearly involved in the case of the second aspect, and here we can use the word in its





normal sense; but this understanding is not a kind of knowledge: one understands *oneself*—one's being—in terms of a meaning.

The form of disclosure in volitional self-understanding that emerged in the discussion of the existential concept of possibility comes to the fore only in the third aspect. When we explicitly consider our potentiality-for-being—although not theoretically—this takes place by raising the practical question, by deliberating. In the section in which Heidegger deals with understanding, the possibility of the explicit practical disclosure is only touched upon in passing. This may be connected to the fact that deliberation is not well suited to be designated as understanding. The word *deliberation* does not occur at all in *Being and Time*; we will later have to ask ourselves why this is the case. The point at issue is expressed, nevertheless, in the following statement by Heidegger: "The projection is the existential constitution of the being of the *open range* (*Spielraum*) of the actual potentiality-for-being" (185, my emphasis).

Deliberation in the form in which it has been encountered in the discussion of possibilities of action is still not *eo ipso* existence in the mode of self-determination; for deliberation concerning who I want to be can still be oriented toward accepted and conventional points of view. But deliberation *can* assume the form of the practical question that is understood in a fundamental sense. Existence in the mode of "authenticity" is an exemplary mode of understanding one's own being in an 'open range of possibilities'; and this is why the analysis of understanding leads directly to the third stage that I proposed for the interpretation of Heidegger's conception of the relation of oneself to oneself—that is, to the question of Heidegger's conception of the relation of oneself to oneself in the strict sense of being-oneself and self-determination.

Heidegger introduces this problem by raising the question of the "who" of Dasein (section 25). The way that he deals with this question again reveals a curious mixture of insight and confusion; and the confusion seems to me to result once more from a lack of language-analytical reflection.

In addressing the question of the who it seems plausible, he says, to proceed from the assumption that "Dasein" is the "being" "that I myself always am." From this one might infer the following: "The who is defined in terms of the I itself, that is, the 'subject' or the 'self.' The who is the thing that maintains its identity through the change

of behavior and experiences, and is thereby related to this multiplicity." Heidegger thus suggests that the concept of the I in the tradition deriving from Fichte arose from such an interpretation of the who question and that for this reason the independence and constancy of the I are understood as substantiality. In contrast, he insists that the question of the who, the self, the I, and the independence and constancy of the I must be understood from the standpoint of existentiality (p. 152, cf. also pp. 369ff.).

How does the question appear from this standpoint? Heidegger writes: "It could be that the who of everyday Dasein is precisely *not* the I that I myself always am" (p. 150). This sounds curiously paradoxical. We will reply, Who am I supposed to be if not I myself? Heidegger answers in response: Initially and for the most part I am not I myself, but the "they-self" (*man-selbst*) (27). "The *they* . . . answers the question of the *who* of everyday Dasein" (pp. 165–166). Heidegger thereby wants to say, I allow what I respectively do and intend and how I understand myself to be determined by what *one* (the they) regards as good, and I do not determine it myself. "With Dasein's lostness in the they, that actual potentiality-for-being that is closest to it—the tasks, rules and standards, the urgency and extent of concernful and solicitous being-in-the-world—has already been decided upon. The they has always kept Dasein from taking hold of these possibilities of being. The they even hides the manner in which it has tacitly relieved Dasein of the burden of explicitly *choosing* these possibilities" (312).

This also indicates the conditions under which I am 'I myself': "the existentiell modification of the they-self into *authentic* being-one's-self must be carried out as the recovery of a choice. But the recovery of choice means choosing this choice, i.e., deciding for a potentiality-of-being on the basis of one's own self" (313).

Thus the state of affairs that Heidegger has in mind is now clear. In the terminology that I used it concerns the practical question insofar as it is posed fundamentally. Since we stand existentially in an open range of possibilities of being, we have the possibility either to consider this range or to conceal it from ourselves, to question ourselves and to choose who we want to be or to evade this question. The account of the they now indicates how this question can be evaded, namely, by doing those things and living in that manner which 'one' generally regards as correct. This implies that one cannot simply exist within





a possibility; all human existence apparently must be grounded in one way or another in something that is regarded as correct. This may be what is generally regarded as correct, or what I myself believe to recognize as correct. If someone does not make the choice himself, he must be relieved of it.

Thus, when Heidegger distinguishes the "I myself" from the "they-self," he is referring to a distinction that he also designates as one between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' existence. Existing authentically means existing in the mode of self-determination, and Heidegger also employs the term *resoluteness* (*Entschlossenheit*) in this context (343). When Heidegger first presented his ideas in lectures at Marburg, the students remarked jokingly, "We are resolute, but we do not know to what purpose." The word one-sidedly emphasizes the aspect of the outcome of a choice. We can make Heidegger's point more accessible if we take into account that a decision (resolution) is the end toward which deliberation proceeds; thus, one might say, the term *resoluteness* represents the entirety of the question, deliberation, choice, and decision, although we will later see that this does not exactly fit Heidegger's conception.

It remains to be noted that Heidegger speaks not only of a choice but also of "choosing this choice." This description addressses the fact that we can either pose the practical question or not pose it: We have the *possibility* to make ourselves open to the range of possibilities. Thus we have the possibility of choosing among possibilities or, as this has also been expressed, we are free either to be free or not. For this reason choice always implies a choosing of choosing, and since in choosing we exist in the mode of being-oneself, Heidegger also speaks of a "choosing oneself" (*Sich-selbst-wählens*) (232, 334).

The last formulation leads us back to the formulations that Heidegger used in connection with the question of the who. The meaning of Heidegger's paradoxical claim that I can be either I myself or not I myself has now been elucidated. As Heidegger himself notes, these expressions refer to "certain ways to be" (163)—that is, to a person's existence that is either in the mode of self-determination or not. The discussion of self-determination finally loses the last appearance of paradox when it becomes clear that it merely addresses the question of whether or not someone himself chooses what he does or wants; in other words, the issue is whether the person himself decides who he is. In the latter formulation—whether he has chosen it himself—

the emphasis upon *himself* is suitable, but it can also just as well be omitted. Perhaps you will protest and insist that not every choice is a self-choosing. But in this case you simply mean that not every choice is a choice in which the person decides about his being, about who (how) he wants to be.

Hence if the word *himself* is even dispensable in the formulation "whether he chooses himself," it is plainly misused when it is employed outside this context in order to express the mode of being of choosing. On this basis the contradictory formulation "I am not I myself" emerges, from which Heidegger had proceeded. Heidegger's talk of being-oneself and choosing oneself are also to be rejected for the same reason. The latter expression certainly would be meaningful if its function were only to express in shortened form that someone chooses who (how) he wants to be. It is misleading, however, if (as is obviously the case with Heidegger) it means that I choose myself or to be myself. We have already seen that the descriptive meaning of this way of speaking is that I choose to choose.

Thus the talk of the self and of being-oneself is based upon a misuse of the word *self* that proceeds in two phases; first, it is torn out of its natural context and, second, it is converted into a substantive. This conversion into a substantive always harbors the danger of hypostatizing a second subject within the person. In Heidegger's case this does not occur, but an analogous paradox arises: He puts *Dasein*, which can either be itself or not itself, in the *place* of the person. We are told that Dasein is not something present-at-hand, that is, a substance, subject, or person; *rather*, it is existence. This is only the more radical position in appearance. In truth existence can only substitute for substance through a failure to grasp it as what it is—namely, the being of a person. And this happens in Heidegger through his conversion of the modes of being themselves into substances: he speaks of "the they," the "being-oneself," and so on. Fortunately, he also provides descriptive formulations that permit an adequate conceptual account of the phenomena and are free of paradox. He has shown that the meaning of the talk of the relation of oneself to oneself is the relation to one's own being; and he shows that the meaning of the talk of self-determination lies in the mode of being of choosing. The difficulty arises through his failure to adhere to these verbal formulations as the only ones that are legitimate for these states of affairs. If one does this, the substantival mode of speaking remains available for the des-





ignation of the person. To be sure, Heidegger would not have consented to this because (as we have already seen) he wanted to have a rift between existence and the being of the present-at-hand.

It is now also clear that the orientation toward the question of the who of Dasein is fundamentally misguided. We know from our earlier discussions that the force of the question who is a request for an identification of the relevant person. Thus Heidegger immediately makes a mistake in his basic approach when he assumes that the question "who am I?" can be answered by "I" or "I myself." We have seen that I cannot identify myself by the use of the word *I*. Now you might point out that I have myself repeatedly used expressions such as "the question at issue is who I want to be." Nonetheless, for the purpose of avoiding misunderstanding I have frequently added "who signifies how, or what kind of a person, I want to be." The word *who* here is not used for individual identification, but for so-called qualitative identification. For example, if a beetle collector wants to identify an exemplar, his goal is not to identify this exemplar as an individual, but to determine the type to which it belongs. And in the present context when we ask "who is that?" with reference to persons, we can obviously mean "what sort of person is he?"

Just as Heidegger presented the misleading talk of being-oneself as an alternative to the conception of the person as subject and substance, he also placed two additional determinations (both illuminating in themselves) in an analogous contrast. These are the determinations of the independence (*Selbständigkeit*) and constancy (*Ständigkeit*) of authentic existence, on whose basis he characterized the difference between authentic and inauthentic existence (351, 369, 381, 426ff.).

The talk of independence or self-sufficiency is easily understood in this context: We call someone independent if he does not act in conformity with what is commonly believed, but deliberates and decides himself. But if the independence that is understood in this way is treated as a competitor to the Aristotelian concept of self-sufficiency (by means of which Aristotle distinguished substance from the determinations that are ontologically dependent upon it), this merely leads to unnecessary paradoxes.

By means of the concept of the constancy of the self Heidegger wants to address the problem of "the 'connectedness of life', i.e., the stretching-along, movement and persistence that are specific for Dasein" (427ff.). I already alluded to this problem when I noted that if

the practical question is posed fundamentally it refers to life as a whole. Heidegger works out this reference to the totality of one's own being through the concept of being-towards-death. The possibility of death is the possibility of no-longer-being. I have so far only referred to this possibility in Hamlet's question of whether it is better to be or not to be. But now we must recognize the more general state of affairs that is contained in this question—namely, the fact that one only perceives the possibility of life (like every possibility) in unity with its negation. But this implies the following: The confrontation with myself (i.e., with my life as such) that is required for choice only takes place in the simultaneous confrontation with the ever-present possibility of the end of my life. Heidegger's talk of being-toward-death has been the object of ridicule, but this has been completely unjustified. From Heidegger's point of view, the confrontation with the "unsurpassable" possibility of death concerns "Dasein's being-in-the-world as such" (294). And I regard as incontestable his thesis that this confrontation (a) sets one free "from one's lostness in those possibilities which may accidentally thrust themselves upon one" (308), and (b) in this respect is a necessary condition for the authenticity of choice (section 62). His thesis is well grounded analytically and can be confirmed through a thought experiment. Furthermore, the principal importance of the confrontation with one's death for the entire problem of self-consciousness must be acknowledged. A subject or an expression standing for a subject cannot be negated, but only a propositional content. Therefore, for the traditional theory of self-consciousness there *could* not be a correlative relation to one's own nonbeing; in 'reflection' the subject relates itself simply to itself. And consequently as soon as one understands the relation of oneself to oneself as a relation of oneself to one's own life, one must also see it as a simultaneous relation of oneself to the possibility of death.

The reference of authentic choice to death (and this means to life as a whole) leads to a way of relating oneself to oneself that Heidegger terms the "stretchedness" (*Erstrecktheit*) of authentic existence; and the type of continuity that he characterized by means of his concept of constancy is also part of this. He does not mean that life proceeds according to a preconceived plan, or that one is not open for a change in one's life conception (cf. pp. 308, 355ff.). But if the change is chosen at the time for a purpose, there is a reason for it; and in this way the continuity in the discontinuity is also restored. This process stands in





contrast to allowing oneself to live from day to day, which is not continuously related in an existential sense—in one's way of acting—even if it always remains the same.

Heidegger not only provided the concept of self-determination with a structurally sound meaning, but he also clarified the sense in which there are two levels of the practical relation of oneself to oneself, as I indicated at the beginning of these lectures. The understanding of the fact that we relate ourselves to ourselves *in* our wanting and doing (and in our emotions and moods as well) has become clear through Heidegger's conception of the relation of oneself to oneself as the relation of oneself to one's own to-be, and through his elaboration of this conception in light of the facticity and possibility character of this to-be. The dual possibility within such a relation of oneself to oneself of self-determination and of evasion in the face of such self-determination is a result of (1) the yes/no polarity that pertains to the understanding of being (or more precisely to the understanding of possible-being) *and* (2) the fact that there is a motive for concealing from oneself the possibility of placing one's own being into question.[1]

But now we must also examine the limits of Heidegger's conception of self-determination. When I introduced the concept of self-determination at the beginning of these lectures, I presented it in immediate connection with what I termed a reflective self-relation. I characterized the latter as that relation of oneself to oneself which places the beliefs implied in one's actions and purposes into question; these involve beliefs about facts as well as normative beliefs. Thus this self-relation stands for the question of truth insofar as it pertains to the presuppositions of one's own action. The appropriateness of the term *reflective* for this mode of the relation of oneself to oneself is not based upon the meaning of the word *reflection* in the traditional theory of self-consciousness; rather, it is grounded in the use of this word in the sense of "deliberation." Thus the reflective self-relation signifies a self-relation that is deliberative. As we have already seen, deliberating means posing a practical question, and a deliberative relation to *oneself* is one in which the practical question becomes fundamental, that is, in which it concerns one's own being. We have also already seen that when we deliberate or pose the practical question, we always ask, What is good?, or more precisely (since one always deliberates about alternatives), What is better or the best? At that point we saw that *good* or *better* is a word that expresses the fact that we prefer something;

but this is not the only thing at issue, since in contrast to *pleasant* the word *good* expresses an objective preference. In the sentence "I prefer it because it gives me more pleasure," the present subjective state is the basis of the decision; in contrast, if we say "because it is better," this implies that there are reasons to prefer it. Sentences with the word *pleasant* are therefore sentences about myself, that is, about a "$\phi$" state of mine; sentences with the word *good* predicate a character of preferability of a state of affairs, and they are objective statements that raise a claim to be justified. And it is for this reason that deliberation is directed toward the issue of the better and the best, since we surely do not have to trouble ourselves about what is more pleasant. Deliberation aims at an objectively justified choice. Therefore advice or counsel is also possible in those cases involving deliberation. When we advise someone we are deliberating about what is preferable for him to do for objective reasons.

We have encountered the issue of the good in the interpretation of Heidegger on several levels, and there actually seems to be a hierarchy of modes of use of the word *good* that is not readily transparent.[2] On the lowest level it obviously does not yet have its objective connotation, for example, when we say "it tastes better to me." If we consider specific activities as part of our 'well-being' because we like doing them, what is good in this sense of goodness is so not because it is to be justified as such through deliberation, but because it serves as a basis for the deliberation about what constitutes the good life for me. We have a particularly difficult situation in the case of the emotions. The emotions and moods are modes of an *immediate* state of being-concerned by something that is good or bad for my being or that affects me through my conception of what the good life is for me. It is for this reason that one can argue with someone (or also with oneself of course) about the justifiability of his emotion or mood. ("You say that things aren't going well, that you are in despair, but actually you have every reason to be satisfied when you consider that your conditions of life are such and such.") We obviously have a more unequivocal situation in those cases in which we deliberate about which possibility of action we should choose, since here we have to deal with a practical question. Nonetheless, it must give us pause to realize that precisely in those cases in which the practical question is posed fundamentally a formulation with the word *good* does not recommend itself; rather, the question who or how do I want to be seems more appropriate.





Still, one can always also pose the question in this way: What is the best thing for me to do? But in this context, when we ask someone for advice about a concrete life decision, he will first adduce reasons, but in the end he will say, "It is your life, only you can decide what the best thing is for you, who you want to be." Thus, there is an ultimate point in deliberation at which we simply can no longer justify the decision objectively; rather, what is best for me at this point is itself only constituted in my wanting it. What is involved here is that second-order wanting in which we adopt position such and such toward our immediate wishes and inclinations. If this were not the case, if wanting in the final instance could still rest upon reasons, the will would lose its significance or force, so to speak; and this means it would no longer be *my* adoption of a position. (You should no longer fear that 'the I' is again returning here. I am challenged in fact, but this means I have to take a position.)

If we now return to Heidegger's concept of self-determination after this excursus on the concept of the reflective self-relation, we must note that the aspect of reflection is missing in Heidegger's conception of self-determination. In any case, no explicit reference is made to the aspect of deliberation at all, and this is related to the absence of the concept of the good from the analysis in *Being and Time*. It is present only in the form of the concept of the for-the-sake-of-which. But this merely stands for the ultimate reference point of wanting. The point of view of objective justification to which the practical question is related is missing entirely. This is connected to the fact that although regard for the well-being of others is incorporated into the preliminary discussion of being-with in a purely descriptive way (section 26), it is missing entirely (or almost entirely) from the subsequent account of self-determination. If we understand by morality those norms that specify what is good or bad for me to do in light of a consideration of the interests of others, such an understanding of morality is not to be found in *Being and Time*. But it would seem clear that either positively or negatively this aspect pertains essentially to the question of who or how I want to be. And the claim of objective justification seems especially apparent for this component of practical deliberation. Of course, it is also the case here that the question of the extent to which I take the moral point of view into account is ultimately a matter to be decided by my choice of what kind of a person I want to be.

The fact that the concept of the good—and correlatively both the concept of deliberation and that of the justification of evaluative and normative statements—cannot be found in Heidegger is a consequence of his concept of truth. I would like to examine this problem only very briefly here, since I have dealt with it extensively in my book *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*. The concept of the good also falls under the concept of truth, since all statements contain a truth claim (and this means a claim to justification); and sentences that say that something is good or better are statements. Now Heidegger did not (as might have been expected) also jettison the concept of truth along with the concept of the good. The issue here is more complex. Heidegger began with the assumption that a statement 'discloses' something, and he formalized the concept of truth in such a way that he ultimately grasped it as coextensive with the concept of disclosure (section 44). But the specific meaning of *true*—namely, the claim to justification and proof—thereby drops out of the account. Yet since the word *truth* is retained, it simultaneously appears as if the concept of truth is preserved and even deepened; and on this basis a peculiarly illusive situation arises. For example, Heidegger designates resoluteness, that is, existence in the mode of authenticity, as "the truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is authentic" (p. 343); and this is completely consistent, of course, since resoluteness is the disclosure in the mode of authenticity. If one adheres to the genuine concept of truth, however, one cannot designate authentic existence directly as truth; rather, one must characterize it as a state of being-directed toward truth in the sense of the practical question regarding the true good. This question includes (1) *gnothi seauton*, the "self-knowledge" that is also touched upon at one point by Heidegger (BT, p. 186), or the process of "becoming transparent to oneself" in the motives underlying one's intentions. And it also involves (2) the question of whether the following set of assumptions has been properly justified: (a) the factual assumptions implied by my intentions, (b) the normative assumptions regarding my obligation toward others that are also implied in my intentions, and finally (c) the evaluative assumptions regarding my own well-being. These objective deliberations constitute the basis for the decision (although it is not deducible from them) concerning who (or how) I want to be. Since Heidegger designates resoluteness directly as the essential truth, this objective basis of deliberation that precedes the decision is not merely overlooked; rather,





the form of resoluteness that is understood in this way is unequivocally separated from the question of truth precisely because it already is the truth itself.

If we understand the word *reason* in its traditional meaning, as the capacity for justification, Heidegger's step here must be characterized as an attempt to banish reason from human existence and particularly from the relation of oneself to oneself. At the beginning of these lectures we noted that the problem of self-consciousness in modern philosophy up to Fichte and Hegel was regarded as philosophically so central only because self-consciousness appeared constitutive for a form of life related to reason. It is therefore all the more surprising that precisely the philosopher who first developed an adequate structural conception of the relation of oneself to oneself abandons the concept of reason.

It might now seem plausible to suspect that Heidegger's concept of the relation of oneself to oneself does not allow for a concept of reason at all. I consider this suspicion unjustified. We have seen that the concept of self-determination as Heidegger developed it can be conceived without violence in conjunction with the concept of deliberation, and therefore it can be understood as a reflective self-relation. Of course, you can object that my interpretation was forced to a certain extent. But this was done intentionally. My intention was not to provide a faithful account of Heidegger, but to extract what we need from Heidegger for our actual formulation of the problem. In my view Heidegger's approach is the only one that permits a structurally irreproachable elucidation of the relation of oneself to oneself in general, and of self-determination in particular.

I would like to go another step further and argue that Heidegger's concept of self-determination not only admits of extension through a relation to reason but also demands this extension on its own grounds. In my view, the concept of self-determination without reason as presented by Heidegger is untenable, and even his own conception is imperceptibly sustained by a relation to reason. Thus, my thesis is that there simply cannot be a form of self-determination that is not understood as a reflective self-relation.

The proof of this rests upon the analytic connection that was established in the last lecture between the strict concept of freedom in the sense of responsible freedom and the concept of deliberation. We saw just now that self-determination means that the involved person

himself chooses who (how) he wants to be. But we also saw that a decision is fundamentally to be understood as the outcome of a deliberation. This does not mean that an actual process of deliberation must precede a decision, but it does mean that a decision implies a deliberation. A choice that cannot even be justified after the fact is not a decision. A choice that is not deliberated, that is not made in light of reasons, is a choice in which I leave how I choose to accident; and in this respect we have to say it was not I who chose. Does our old phantom 'the I' return here for one last time? Of course not, since we have already seen that the meaning of talking about whether it was I who chose consist in establishing whether I have chosen in a certain way.

According to Heidegger, authentic choice is supposed to bring Dasein back from its lostness in the arbitrariness and contingency of the possibilities in which it actually finds itself. If this is to be the meaning of the choice, it requires a criterion or standard. It became clear early in our discussion that Dasein does not possess a material criterion in something like its 'self,' which it would merely have to apply to its possibilities; indeed, a material criterion is out of the question here. The only thing a standard can mean here is a way of confronting one's possibilities in authentic choice, namely, a manner of raising questions about them. The only criterion that Heidegger furnishes is the confrontation with death, and this is certainly a necessary condition. But is it sufficient?

Heidegger himself writes: "One's anticipatory projection on that possibility of existence which is not to be outstripped—on death—guarantees only the totality and authenticity of one's resoluteness. But those possibilities of existence which have actually been disclosed are not to be gathered from death" (p. 434). But then where are they to be found? Heidegger's answer is from one's own thrownness, and this means from one's historicity (435–437). Although it is correct to say that it is part of authentic existence to accept oneself as what one is and has become, it is still trivial to say that the possibilities that are to be chosen are those that are in fact given; such a strategy provides exactly no criterion for the choice between possibilities. Heidegger moves in circles here: On the one hand, the choice is supposed to free one from the contingency of possibilities in which one actually finds oneself; on the other hand, he refers the choice itself to historicity, to the possibilities in which one actually finds oneself. Since Heidegger





envisages no justification for why one of several historically given possibilities is chosen instead of another, it is an irrational choice in the strict sense of the word.

In the case of an irrational choice we tend to adopt the following description: Something has chosen rather than I have chosen. Why? We saw earlier that if the will could still rely upon reasons in the final instance, my adoption of a position would lose its force, and would not be my adoption of a position. But the following is equally true: If the will were not obliged to rely upon reasons in the penultimate instance, my adoption of a position would be without force, and would not be my adoption of a position. Thus, the upshot of this is that the distinguishing feature of that choice which can be characterized as self-determination is that the choice is carried out in the mode of *rational volition*. The choice cannot be understood as self-determination either (a) if one denies its irreducible volitional character, that is, if one claims to be able to reduce it to rationality, or (b) if (like Heidegger) one denies that it must be able to rest upon justification, that is, that it is grounded in the question of truth even though it cannot be fully resolved in this question.

The fact that Heidegger still retained the concept of truth (though in the illusive mode suggested) can be regarded as evidence that even his derationalized conception continues to be imperceptibly sustained by a relation to reason. The consequences of this derationalized conception of choice and the derationalized concept of truth, however, can be seen in a speech that Heidegger gave in November 1933. The speech was given in support of Hitler prior to the national referendum on Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations. It begins in this way: "The German people are called upon to choose by their leader [*Führer*]. But the leader does not demand anything of the people; rather, he offers the people the immediate possibility of the supreme free decision: whether the people as a whole will claim their own Dasein, or whether they will fail to claim it. Tomorrow the people choose nothing less than their future." And it then continues: "What kind of an occasion is this? The people recover the truth of their will as Dasein, for truth is the disclosure of what makes a people certain, clear and strong in their acting and knowing."[1] These quotes indicate that Heidegger's Nazism was no accidental affair, but that a direct path led from his philosophy—from its derationalized concept of truth and the concept of self-determination defined by this—to Nazism.

Nonetheless, we would be relinquishing philosophical insight if we did not want to learn what we can from Heidegger for this reason. The point is to recognize precisely the position that led to irrationalism, and not to throw the baby out with the bath water.



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# Heidegger and the source(s) of intelligibility

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**Abstract.** Wittgensteinian readings of *Being and Time*, and of the source of the intelligibility of Dasein's world, in terms of language and the average everyday public practices of *das Man* are partly right and partly wrong. They are right in correcting overly individualist and existentialist readings of Heidegger. But they are wrong in making Heidegger into a proponent of language or everydayness as the final word on intelligibility and the way the world is disclosed to us. The everydayness of *das Man* and language are *partial* sources of intelligibility but only insofar as they are comprehended within the greater unitary structure of care and temporality. Care and temporality constitute the foundational underpinnings for disclosure and the intelligibility of "that wherein Dasein dwells."

When, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes human beings or "Dasein" as "being-in-the-world," the relation between human beings and their world is not an accidental one. As Heidegger makes explicit, the world in which Dasein exists is not simply a collection of objects, but a "relational totality . . . we call *significance*" which is "disclosed beforehand with a certain intelligibility [*Verständlichkeit*]"(SZ 87, 86).[1] Elsewhere Heidegger writes that the world, the background against which humans project their possibilities, has *meaning* (*Sinn*) and that meaning is "that wherein the intelligibility of anything is sustained" (SZ 151). The world is from the outset something intelligible and significant to human beings. It is not, as other philosophical models might have it, something which could turn out to be unintelligible to us.

It is true, as Heidegger points out, that discrete entities sometimes show up as unintelligible (as in our encounters with nature). Yet in such cases, "unintelligible" natural events and entities always manifest themselves within the context of the intelligible worldliness of the world (SZ 211). In other words, it is in light of what is intelligible that the unintelligible appears as unintelligible. So, intelligibility is a fundamental feature of our world and, whether wholly or deficiently, of the entities within it.[2] Two further points deserve mention: First, such intelligibility is not a matter of theoretical understanding

or understandability as envisaged within the Platonic, Leibnizian or Kantian traditions. The type of intelligibility operative in Heidegger is prior to and independent of theoretical inquiry. Second, to say that the world is immediately intelligible should not be understood to mean that the way in which the world is *immediately* intelligible represents its most accurate rendering.

But now the following question arises: What is it that provides for this intelligibility and our consequent ability to come to grips with the world around us? What exactly is the source of intelligibility in Heidegger? Recent Wittgensteinian interpretations of Heidegger deserve credit for bringing this question to the forefront.[3] Their answer has been that the source of intelligibility lies in alternatively 1) discourse and language or 2) Heidegger's "*das Man*" ("the they" or "the anyone") and its "everyday practices." In Parts I and II of this essay, we argue that these are mistaken, albeit instructive, interpretations. In Part III, we put forth our own candidate for the source of the intelligibility of Dasein's world. It is the temporality of the care structure of Dasein, conceived as underlying and unifying in a non-reductive fashion Heidegger's existentials (*Existenzialien*) or conditions for the possibility of human existence.

## I. Language

One strategy for explaining the source of intelligibility assimilates the argument of *Being and Time* to the twentieth-century "linguistic turn" in philosophy, especially in its Wittgensteinian dispensation. In his pioneering account of Heidegger's confrontation with traditional epistemology, Charles Guignon has suggested that the source of the intelligibility of Dasein's world lies in Heidegger's notions of discourse (*Rede*) and language (*Sprache*).[4] Guignon writes:

> [W]ith the concept of "meaning" Heidegger is trying to identify a source of intelligibility that lies even deeper than that of the totalities of significance we appropriate in our interpretations. . . . What is the source of this most primordial level of intelligibility? Heidegger says that it is "discursiveness" or "talk" [*Rede*].[5]

A few pages later, he writes: "the shared world of intelligibility . . . is ultimately found to be maintained in language."[6] So Guignon holds that, according to Heidegger, *discourse* or *language* (or both) are *the* ultimate source of the world's intelligibility for Dasein. In what follows we shall explain how Guignon supports his position and why we regard it as mistaken.





To support his claim that discourse is the source of intelligibility Guignon cites the following crucial passage from *Being and Time*:

> Intelligibility [*Verständlichkeit*] has always been articulated [*gegliedert*] even before there is any appropriate interpretation of it. Discourse is the articulation [*Artikulation*] of what is intelligible. Therefore it underlies both interpretation and assertion. That which can be articulated in interpretation, and thus even more primordially in discourse, is what we have called "meaning." (SZ 161)

Discourse is not only a universal and invariant *Existenzial* and one of the three equiprimordial characteristics of being-in, alongside affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) and understanding (*Verstehen*). According to Guignon, it also underlies and gives shapes to our interpretation of entities and our assertions about them. When it comes to language, Guignon usefully distinguishes between two views. The instrumentalist view of language regards language as an instrument or accessory for maximizing the intelligibility of what we have already understood pre-linguistically. The constitutive view, on the other hand, "pictures language not so much as a tool on hand for our use as a *medium* in which man dwells. On the constitutive view, language generates and first makes possible our full-blown sense of the world."[7] Guignon contends that Heidegger in SZ is torn between the two views. While many passages in SZ clearly support Heidegger's having held the instrumentalist view, Guignon points out that the constitutive view is i) more consistent with the overall thought of SZ and ii) clearly his considered position in his later work.[8]

In point of fact, we agree with everything just said but take exception with Guignon's conclusions about the source(s) of intelligibility. Let us begin with language. There are several reasons for thinking that language is not the source of the intelligibility of the world (aside from the fact that its appearance in SZ is rather limited). The first is that Heidegger explicitly says that language is derivative on something more fundamental, namely, discourse. As he puts it in his 1925 lecture course: "*There is language only because there is discourse.*"[9] The second is that, as Guignon acknowledges and documents, Heidegger's view of language at the time of SZ is more instrumentalist than constitutive. In SZ, words come after the fact and "accrue to meanings" (*den Bedeutungen wachsen Worte zu*) (SZ 161). This point is explicit in his 1925 lecture, where Heidegger says: "*Language makes manifest [offenbar]. It does not produce anything like discoveredness* [our emphasis]. Rather discoveredness and its enactment of being . . . are conditions of possibility for something becoming manifest."[10] But the most important reason is this: Even if the rest of SZ is consistent with and more in the spirit of the constitutive view of lan-

guage, this would not entail that language is the source of the intelligibility of our world. The constitutive view says that language is the "medium" in which we understand the world and that it generates our "full-blown sense of the world." Language may well be the medium of our understanding and, as such, it would enable and shape our thought and experience, do so unavoidably, and be so much a part of our thought and experience that we cannot really separate ourselves from it. All of this may be true. But to say those things is not to say that language is the *source* of intelligibility. The latter claim may also be true, but Heidegger nowhere commits himself to anything like it. The constitutive view of language does not do so either since the medium in which something lives need not be (and usually is not) the source of that thing. For Heidegger, then, language is a core aspect of our lived experience, but not its source.

Finally, consider the role of discourse. Discourse, Heidegger says, is "the articulation of intelligibility" (*die Artikulation der Verständlichkeit*) (SZ 161). It is not necessarily composed of words, since it includes, along with speaking and hearing, the phenomenon of remaining silent (Schweigen). Earlier, Heidegger associates discourse with *logos* and the addressing and discussing (*Ansprechen und Besprechen*) which lets something be seen (SZ 32). In §34 of SZ, Heidegger goes on to elucidate discourse in terms of an "ontologically broad notion of communication" (*Mitteilung*) (SZ 162). Thus, discourse is essentially the shareable and communicable articulatedness of what is understood which "lets see" what is understood. By according discourse primordial status, Heidegger is claiming that we live and disclose our world by means not only of moods and project-oriented understanding but also of the world's essential and "always already" shared and communicable articulatedness.

There are essentially three reasons for thinking that discourse cannot be the source or "most primordial level" of the intelligibility of our world. First, discourse is, along with affectedness or moods and understanding, one of the *three* core aspects of "being-in." Just as it would not be correct to say that moods are the source or most primordial level of intelligibility, nor can we say this of discourse either. Second, textual evidence suggests that Heidegger regards the role of discourse as less important than that of affectedness and understanding. While Heidegger starts out by treating the three phenomena as equiprimordial (SZ 133), he sometimes give less credit to discourse. For example, Heidegger twice speaks of the constitutive character of affectedness and understanding, while leaving out discourse (SZ 182, 184) and twice replaces discourse with the phenomenon of falling (SZ 349, 350). Finally, even more direct textual evidence contradicts the view that discourse is the deepest source of intelligibility. In the passage that Guignon supports and relies on (SZ 161, quoted above), Heidegger says that: "Discourse is the articulation of what is intelligible. Therefore it underlies interpretation and assertion." Yet





note that even if discourse underlies all interpretation, if it articulates what is (already) intelligible, then it cannot be the source of the intelligibility that it articulates. To articulate something is to have something that already exists that can be articulated. This something must, then, have some other source. We conclude then that neither discourse nor language is the source of the intelligibility of Dasein's world. Although both are central to our existence and to Heidegger's analytic of Dasein, the *ultimate* source of intelligibility must be sought elsewhere.

## II. *Das Man* and "everyday social practices"

We turn now to the second candidate for the source of intelligibility: *das Man*, i.e. "the they" (in the English translations) or "the one" (Dreyfus) or "the anyone" (Guignon) and its "everyday social practices."[11] *Das Man* plays an all-important albeit ambiguous role in *Being and Time*. On the one hand it appears as Dasein's ever-present tendency to lose itself uncritically in the anonymous ways of society. On the other hand, *das Man* is responsible for the shared character of our experience, in effect, the fact that we can understand each other. The first aspect of *das Man* has been stressed by those who see Heidegger primarily as an existentialist thinker. The second aspect has been championed by commentators who regard him as a kind of pragmatist or Wittgensteinian. While the pragmatist interpretation is a useful corrective to the extreme individualism of the older existentialist interpretation, we shall argue that Dreyfus and followers overshoot the mark by reducing Heidegger's concern with the question of being to the matter of our everyday social practices.

Dreyfus's position on the source of intelligibility is made loud and clear by the titles of two sections of Chapter Eight of his influential *Being-in-the-World*: "The Positive Function of the One: Conformity as the Source of Intelligibility" and "The One as the Source of Significance and Intelligibility."[12] His position is as follows:

> For both Heidegger and Wittgenstein, then, the source of the intelligibility of the world is the average public practices through which alone there can be any understanding at all. What is shared is not a conceptual scheme, . . . [but] simply our average comportment. Once a practice has been explained by appealing to what one does, no more basic explanation is possible. . . . [T]he constant control the one exerts over each Dasein makes a coherent referential whole, shared for-the-sake-of-whichs, and thus, ultimately, significance and intelligibility possible.[13]

Dreyfus's argument has two steps. The first step consists in Dreyfus's claim that, in SZ (at least in Division I), Dasein's understanding is coextensive with and essentially defined by *das Man* and its everyday social practices.[14] The second step comes with the claim that such practices constitutes *the* source of the intelligibility of Dasein's world. We shall argue that while the first step is partly right and partly wrong, the second step is wholly unjustifiable.

Let us first examine Dreyfus's claim that Dasein's understanding is coextensive with the average, everyday understanding of *das Man*. This interpretation departs from most earlier Heidegger readings of Heidegger, whether German, French or Anglo-American. In this context, it is worthwhile to consider Frederick Olafson's recent critique of Dreyfus's interpretation:

> [A]lthough the word "social" is ubiquitous in Dreyfus's rendering of Heidegger's relevant views, there is only one occurrence in all of *Being and Time* of each of the two German words for "social" (*sozial and gesellschaftlich*). It should also be pointed out that although Dreyfus treats it as the master concept for explicating *Dasein*, the place of the concept of *Das Man* in Heidegger's thought appears to have been less secure. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* . . . there is no mention at all of *das Man*.[15]

Olafson is right about this much: Heidegger is not fully explicit about the social nature of understanding in *Being and Time*. But as Olafson himself goes on to concede, there certainly is a social dimension to Heidegger's analysis of Dasein.[16] The difference between Dreyfus and Olafson, then, concerns the extent and exact nature of the social character of Dasein's existence. As it turns out, for Olafson, it is Heidegger's "being-with" ("*Mitsein*") and its negative conformism as *das Man* that makes up Dasein's social dimension. For Dreyfus, however, Dasein's social nature is also very much dependent on a positive, constitutive role played by *das Man* in the emergence of Dasein's understanding. We shall argue that Dreyfus is right about the constitutive role played by *das Man*, though wrong about several further claims about *das Man*.

Recall that "being-with" refers to the character of existence as *always* lived alongside and shared with other human beings or Daseins which is immediately given to us and not in need of proof. Thus, even a shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe or a Buddhist monk in solitary meditation does not depart from the being-with character of human existence. Heidegger writes: "Even Dasein's being alone is being-with in the world. The other can be *missing* only *in* and *for* a being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of being-with" (SZ 120).[17] What the existential structure of *das Man* or "the anyone" (introduced in the same chapter) adds to being-with is this: Dasein not only shares the universe with other Daseins, but its very understanding of itself and its world is shaped and made possible by a shared grasp of the world. This is the positive role of *das Man* that is so important to Dreyfus's interpretation and that is neglected by Olafson and others. *Das Man* is not merely, as Olafson would have it, a "distorted modality of Mitsein," i.e. our being-with others when we are in an inauthentic and conformist mode.[18] This is not to deny that *das Man* is conformist (it is!), but *das Man* adds something *positive* to the notion of "being-with," as the following passage from Heidegger's 1925 lecture course squarely confirms:

> *Das Man* as that which forms everyday being-with-one another . . . constitutes what we call publicness [*Öffentlichkeit*] in the strict sense. This means that the world is always already primarily given as the common [*gemeinsame*] world. . . . First of all and everyday . . . there is precisely the world in which one is with one another. It is out of this world that one can first more or less genuinely grow into his own world. This common world, which is there primarily and into which every maturing Dasein first grows, governs [*regelt*] as the public world every interpretation of the world and of Dasein.[19]

So Dreyfus is quite right that Dasein's understanding and Dasein's world is *first of all* and, in a sense to be specified below, *always* shaped by the everyday social ways of *das Man*.[20]

But (and here our critique of Dreyfus begins) *das Man* is not *only* the locus of our shared understanding of the world, it is also a description of our inauthentic, conformist mode of existence that is only "first and for the most part."[21] There are other modes of existence that are different from *das Man* and its everyday ways. *Das Man* and everydayness do not, as Dreyfus suggests, fully circumscribe the way that we always are. It is crucial to note the difference, neglected by Dreyfus, between primordial or existential features, on the one hand, and first and for the most part [*zunächst und zumeist*] features of Dasein's existence, on the other. The latter phrase refers to what is typically, but *not always*, the case.[22] "Existential," by contrast, refers to universal and necessary features of Dasein's existence which, when "primordial," provide the inner possibility to be this way or that.[23] Dasein's patterns of average everydayness (*durchschnittliche Alltäglichkeit*) are, despite Dreyfus's repeated assertions to the contrary, not primordial, but rather patterns which obtain only some or most of the time. Everyday phenomena, Heidegger clearly says, are "first and for the most part" (SZ 43, 370) and thus neither the deepest mode of analysis nor the only manner of Dasein's existence.

One might argue here that Heidegger does conceive of everydayness as something that always obtains by pointing to the following passages:

> Out of [everydayness] – and back into it again – is all existing such as it is. (SZ 43).

> This everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has proximally grown, with never a possibility of extrication. In it, out of it and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting and communicating, all rediscovering and appropriating anew are performed. It is not the case that Dasein is ever untouched and unseduced by this way in which things have been interpreted. . . . (SZ 169).

Yet these passages do not show that everydayness is without exception. Heidegger means that everydayness bears an important relation to and shapes all modes of existence because everyday ways of being are a kind of permanent background experience out of which noneveryday understanding (e.g., authentic resoluteness, anxiety or theoretical inquiry) grows and back into which it eventually recedes. But the insight that experience and understanding always takes place against this background does not mean that all experience and understanding is everyday. After all, it is only because "everydayness" is not permanent that the prepositions "in," "out," "against," and "back into" in those passages make sense. Heidegger focuses on everydayness not because it is everpresent or primordial, but because it provides a more suitable means by which to "exhibit . . . the essential structures which remain ontologically determinative" (SZ 16f.) than does the rarified contemplative stance adopted, for instance, by Descartes in his *Meditations*.

Dreyfus is wrong, then, to think that Dasein's existence is coextensive with everyday social practices since Dasein clearly sometimes adopts or falls into noneveryday ways. But now what about Dreyfus's claim that Heidegger's analysis is an analysis of Dasein's *social* nature? As Olafson notes, Heidegger hardly ever talks about Dasein's social nature. Yet, as we saw, Heidegger believes that Dasein's understanding is always and fundamentally social in that Dasein's existence is always "governed" by the public world of *das Man* in which Dasein comes to exist. To say that Dasein is thoroughly and irremediably social in its understanding and behavior is thus consistent with Heidegger's writings (as well as with common sense).

While Dasein's existence is not limited to the mode of everydayness, its character is *always* social. But does its social character mean that Dasein's understanding is coextensive with *das Man's* understanding? Dreyfus says yes; we say no. Dreyfus holds that the ways of *das Man* are primordial and exhaustive and that Heidegger's goal in the analytic of Dasein is simply a





reconstruction of the ways of *das Man*. We assert that *das Man* is not the whole story and that Heidegger's philosophical goals lie beyond *das Man's* understanding and self-understanding.

There is, admittedly, conflicting textual evidence about the exact role and status of *das Man*. On the one hand, Heidegger describes *das Man* as an existential and primordial structure (SZ 129). Yet, on the very same page, he explicitly says that Dasein is in the mode of *das Man* only first of all and for the most part [*zunächst und zumeist*], not permanently.[24] There are at least three strategies for resolving the contradictory textual evidence. The first is to say that the ways of *das Man* exhaust the ways of Dasein. We find this strategy unacceptable because it is incompatible with numerous statements to the contrary and with a large part of SZ (in both divisions) that holds out the possibility of a piecemeal overcoming of *das Man*. Second, one might hold that *das Man* is widespread but not permanent and not exhaustive of Dasein's existence. Although Heidegger does attribute to *das Man* existential status, one could argue that he is actually asserting that *das Man* is a universal, necessary and invariant feature of Dasein such that its existence is first and for the most part identical to that of *das Man*. This reading is compatible with the text. On this reading, there is more to Dasein's ways than the ways of *das Man* (and more to SZ than Dreyfus recognizes).

Finally, there is a third, more complex strategy. It could be reasoned that while *das Man always* obtains insofar as our understanding is always rooted in a publicly shared language and culture, what Dasein sometimes breaks with or surpasses is not *das Man*, but *das Man-selbst*, i.e. the anyone-self. This interpretation is supported by the following passage:

> The self of everyday Dasein is the anyone-self [*das Man-selbst*], which we distinguish from the *authentic self* – that is, from the self taken hold of in its own way. . . . *Authentic being-one's self* does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from '*das Man*'; it is rather an existentiell modification of '*das Man*' as an essential existential structure. (SZ 129–130)

On this interpretation, Dasein is always *das Man* in that its grasp of the world is always the shared grasp of its social environment. What changes is Dasein's self. Sometimes Dasein is an inauthentic anyone-self; other times, though more rarely, it is an authentic I-self, i.e. a self whose understanding is individual and distinctive albeit not detached from *das Man*. This means that when we become authentic and resolute, we do not cease to comprehend the way others think about things. Authentic being-in-the-world is not at all an erasure of the common, anonymous understanding of *das Man*, rather authenticity is

a surpassing of that common understanding which consists in reappropriating it in a way that is distinctively one's own.[25]

Notice that on either of the two acceptable interpretations of *das Man*, Dasein's ways are not exhausted by the ways of *das Man*. On the one interpretation (the second discussed), *das Man* is operative some, but not all of the time. On the other interpretation (the third strategy), *das Man* functions as a permanent (levelled-down) background grasp of the world that Dasein never wholly supersedes. Dasein does, however, sometimes take hold of and reappropriate *das Man* in a novel, "ownmost" manner that is not itself provided for by the anonymous, shared horizons of *das Man*. Either way, *das Man* does not circumscribe absolutely Dasein's possible understanding and behavior. Dreyfus overlooks the fact that much is intelligible to us outside the average, anonymous repertoire of the "anyone" such as the direct confrontation with the sublimity and power of nature, the discoveries of fundamental ontology or one's most proper possibilities uncovered by one's authentic self. While such "intelligibilities" are enabled partly by the traditions of *das Man*, they are nonetheless obscured by its levelling tendencies and can only be made accessible in virtue of fundamental moods, philosophical analysis or authentic self-determination.[26]

We now come to the second step of Dreyfus's argument that *das Man* and its everyday social practices are not only coextensive with Dasein's existence, but *the* source of the intelligibility of Dasein's existence and its world. As Dreyfus says: "[Heidegger's] description of the phenomenon of everydayness in Division I affirms the one [das Man] as *ens realissimum* – as the end of the line of explanations of intelligibility."[27] Our rejection of this step follows from our argument that the "levelled-down" ways of *das Man* and average everydayness are not the only sources of intelligibility. Indeed neither are they the only sources of truth (in Heidegger's sense of the word) since, although Dasein is always in truth, the understanding of *das Man* fundamentally involves a kind of *untruth* (SZ 221f). There are two more reasons for denying that *das Man* is the source of intelligibility. First, as with discourse and language, *das Man* cannot be *the* source because it is only one of a number of existential structures, all of which are equally necessary and basic conditions for making the world intelligible as we know it. Second, *das Man* cannot be *the* source of intelligibility or the end of the line for explaining Dasein because *das Man* in SZ is not only a sort of explanans but also the explanandum (the "fact" in need of explanation). After all, *das Man* explains the shared and communicable aspect of Dasein's ability to make sense of the world. But what makes possible this sharable making sense of the world in the first place? We shall argue in the next section of this paper that according to Heidegger, care





and its temporality make possible and explain our sense-making capacities (though perhaps not specifically their public and communicable dimension).

Before moving on to care and temporality, let us make one last point about these interpretations. One might argue that their claims about the source(s) of intelligibility are not meant to identify a deep structure which makes possible the world's intelligibility, but rather a structure or phenomenon which produces the concrete content of each Dasein's world.[28] Indeed, language and shared social norms probably shape and, in a sense, produce much or all of our concrete experience and knowledge. But this assertion, which on some level is rather uncontroversial, does not accurately describe the argument of SZ. First, the focus or ambition of Heidegger's argument in SZ was not to show that language or society or anything else determines our experience at the ontic or existentiell level. Second, Heidegger nowhere singles out language or social norms as more fundamental than other existential structures (e.g. moods) in determining the concrete content of our experience. One of the questions that is central to SZ is this: What is it about the structure or nature of being-in-the-world that makes possible and ensures the world's intelligibility? It is to this question that we now turn.

## III. Care and its temporality

Part of our reasoning for holding that neither language nor *das Man* can be considered *the* source of intelligibility in SZ derives from Heidegger's insistence that there are a plurality of necessary and equiprimordial existential structures which underlie and make possible Dasein's world. It would seem to follow, then, that no "super" or "master" *Existenzial* could possibly serve as *the* source of intelligibility. Yet we shall argue now that care (*Sorge*) and, at a deeper level, its temporal structure do in fact serve this role.

Care is *not* just *another* existential structure. It is, Heidegger says, the very meaning of the structural whole that Dasein is. Thus: "[The being of Dasein is to be made visible as *care* . . . when understood *ontologically* Dasein is care" (SZ 47).[29] What makes care special is that it i) embraces, unlike the other existential structures, the totality (*Seinsganzheit, Strukturganzheit*) of Dasein's existence (SZ 182, 193, 196, 209) and ii) is "earlier" than . . . any of its ways of behaving, [because it] is the "apriori" character of its constitution of being (SZ 206). Heidegger explicitly states that structures such as "being-in-the-world, being-in, being-with, *das Man*, discoveredness, understanding, falling . . . [and] the manifold of structures" find their roots (*Verwurzelung*) in the structure of care, thus giving care a privileged status.[30]

But what *is* care and why does it have this comprehensive and primordial character? Heidegger defines care as "ahead-of-oneself-being-already-in-the-

world as being-alongside intraworldly entities" (*Sich-vorweg-schon-sein-in-der-Welt als Sein-bei innerweltlich begegnendem Seiendem*) (SZ 192). As its length indicates, much is contained in this definition: i) that we are thrown or find ourselves in a world without having so chosen (being-already-in); ii) that we tend to become transfixed by the things around us (being-alongside); and perhaps most importantly iii) that we are creatures engaged in projects directed at future states of being (being-ahead-of oneself). It is this last aspect that Heidegger stresses in his initial definition of Dasein as that entity "which in its being is concerned about this being" ("*daß es diesem Seienden in seinem Sein* um *dieses Sein selbst geht*") (SZ 12, 42) and to which he so often returns throughout SZ.

Now Heidegger tells us that all reality as we know it and all understanding of being is "dependent upon" and must "be referred back to" the phenomenon of care (SZ 211, 212, 230). Why? Because care ultimately makes possible and gives shape to our ability to make sense of what is around us. This is tantamount to saying that care (at least prior to consideration of the whole dimension of temporality and time) is the primary source of the intelligibility of our world, as is suggested most clearly by the following passage:

> In [care] the full disclosure of the there is grounded. This lightedness [*Gelichtetheit*] first makes possible all lighting and illumination, every grasping, "seeing" and having of something. (SZ 350f.)

Why is care that which makes possible and provides the source for the intelligibility of that which we disclose? The argument, which runs throughout Heidegger's early work, deserves more extensive discussion. Here we give only its gist. The claim that we are care entails that entities always somehow *matter* to us. It is because entities matter to us that they can have meaning and thus be intelligible. Take away the mattering and no basis remains from which we can make sense of that which we encounter. So, care makes possible the intelligibility of the world and shapes the particular ways in which the world becomes intelligible. In this sense, care is the inner possibility and source of the intelligibility of our world.

But this bare-bones account of Heidegger's explanation of intelligibility only tells part of the story. Heidegger's view is that care itself must be understood in terms of that which makes it possible, namely, Dasein's ecstatic temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*).[31] There can be no question about the existence of textual evidence on this point:





> [T]he primordial ontological basis for Dasein's existentiality is *temporality*. The articulated structural totality of Dasein's being as care can only become intelligible existentially in terms of temporality. (SZ 234).[32]

> Temporality is the ground of the possibility of these structures of care. Being-ahead-of-oneself is a mode of time . . . [T]ime temporalizes. And temporalizing constitutes temporality. Being-ahead-of-oneself is a mode, in which time is temporal.[33]

> Ecstatic temporality originally lights/clears [*lichtet*] the there. (SZ 351)

Such is Heidegger's position; but what are his grounds for attributing this role to temporality? In the space remaining we can only give a sketch of Heidegger's answer by showing i) in what sense temporality is the enabling condition and deeper meaning of care; ii) how Heidegger's temporality differs from ordinary conceptions and iii) how it is that temporality provides the source of intelligibility of our world or, as Heidegger says, "originally clears/lights the there." Perhaps Heidegger was not entirely successful in this last endeavor. In any case, our attempt to find a justification for this last step here can only be provisional and preliminary.

First, what is the link between care and temporality? As we have seen, Heidegger defines care as "ahead-of-oneself-being-already-in-the-world as being-alongside intra-worldly entities." Of course, this is an overtly temporal definition. "Already-being-in-the-world" refers to our having-been or "already-ness."[34] "Being-alongside . . ." signifies our absorption in the present. Most important, since Heidegger says that the future is primary (SZ 327, 329), "being-ahead-of-oneself" is about our future and the manner in which our projectedness into the future structures how we presently understand our past. Put together, Dasein is care insofar as Dasein inherits the past, is preoccupied with the present and able to act on its future by understanding its past and its present in terms of its concern for what it can come to be.

This account is only a first approximation of Dasein's temporality because, as Heidegger insists, his conceptions of the past, present and future are not to be understood according to the commonsense or "vulgar" conceptions of these notions. For Heidegger, temporality is not a matter of the past as the "not any longer now – but earlier," the present as a "now point" and the future as a "not yet now – but later" (SZ 327). Time is not a series of now-points. Rather, time is grounded in Dasein's temporality which is essentially a structure of *self*-understanding. "Past" temporality, or what has been, has the structure of coming back to oneself. "Present" temporality has the structure of presenting so that what one has been and what one will be express themselves in what one does. "Future" temporality has the structure of coming towards oneself.

It is the way in which what has been is taken up in what is to be. These characterizations help us to see how the three dimensions are interdependent yet distinguishable from one another. Each involves the others, but in each case the primacy goes to one of the dimensions. The key to Heidegger's account of temporality is the way in which past, present and future co-exist and co-determine each other as ways in which human existence understands itself and the particulars in its world: "Temporalizing does not signify that ecstasies come 'one after the other.' The future is *not later* than having been, and having been is *not earlier* than the present" (SZ 350). Past, present and future are "ecstasies." They include an essential relation to the other tenses. In this sense they are literally what they are by being "outside" of themselves and by taking us outside of ourselves insofar as our possibilities always involve i) more than what one is at any single point in time and ii) entities distinct from oneself.

We have seen that i) care makes possible and clears/lights all grasping and all disclosure, and that ii) temporality is the ground of the possibility of care. A fortiori, temporality is the deepest source of the intelligibility of our world or, as Heidegger says, temporality is the basic existential ("*das Grundexistential des Daseins*").[36] But how exactly does Dasein's temporality provide for the intelligibility of the world? In SZ Heidegger maintains that temporality grounds understanding, articulation and the "hermeneutic as-structure" (SZ 360), the "intentionality" of consciousness (SZ 363n.), and the unity of significance of Dasein's world (SZ 365). Throughout these pages, part of the idea is that our ability to understand entities as thus and such depends on our ability to shift temporal perspectives and to connect those different perspectives together in one experience. This argument for the temporality of understanding is still very much in the spirit of Husserl's view that temporality plays a vital role in the synthesis of different perspectives constitutive of our intentional directedness toward objects.[37] Heidegger, however, abandons the primacy of perceptual perspectives that characterizes Husserl's approach in favor of the temporal perspectives of pre-theoretical concernful involvement.

But perhaps the most Heideggerian strategy for showing that temporality grounds intelligibility is articulated in the final section of the 1927 lecture *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (which Heidegger described as an elaboration of division 3 of part I of *Being and Time*). That section is entitled "Being and beings. The ontological difference" and focuses almost exclusively on the problem of temporality. Heidegger begins this section by reiterating that "temporality . . . is the condition of possibility of the intentionality founded in transcendence. . . . It enables Dasein's comportment toward beings . . . [and] the understanding of being."[38] A few pages later he tells us that Dasein's understanding of being occurs not by means of a direct relation to being, but





by means of Dasein's occupation with its own ability-to-be (*Seinkönnen*).[39] So, any understanding of entities and being depends fundamentally on our relation to possibility or possibilities. Finally, we find this passage:

> Because the original determinant of possibility, the origin of possibility itself, is time, time temporalizes itself as the absolutely earliest. . . . [Time [is] the source of all enablings (possibilities).[40]

The argument – here only a sketch of an argument – is that the world is intelligible only in light of our "possibilizing" and that possibilizing is a matter of time and Dasein's temporality in the form of the "ahead" (*vorweg*), "already" (*schon*) and presenting "with" (*bei*) or the expecting-forgetting-presenting (*gewärtigend-vergessendes Gegenwärtigen*) that constitutes Dasein's care structure. In drastically abbreviated form: The world is intelligible because it matters. It matters because we are care. We are care insofar as we are "possibilizers." And, finally, we can possibilize insofar as time and temporality are at the root of our existence. If this argument is correct, then the source of intelligibility is ultimately to be explained in terms of Heidegger's larger philosophical project, announced early on in *Being and Time*: "*[T]ime needs to be explicated primordially as the horizon for the understanding of being and in terms of temporality as the being of Dasein which understands being*" (SZ 17).[41]

## IV. Conclusion

We have argued that Wittgensteinian readings of *Being and Time*, and of the source of the intelligibility of Dasein's world, in terms of language and the average everyday public practices of *das Man* are partly right and partly wrong. They are right in correcting overly individualist and existentialist readings of Heidegger. But they are wrong in making Heidegger into a proponent of language or everydayness as the final word on intelligibility and the way the world is disclosed to us. The everydayness of *das Man* and language are *partial* sources of intelligibility but only insofar as they are comprehended within the greater unitary structure of care and temporality. Care and temporality constitute the foundational underpinnings for disclosure and the intelligibility of "that wherein Dasein dwells."[42]

## Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1979). References to this work are indicated by "SZ" and the page number. Pagination of the German edition is included in the margins of both English translations. Our translations follow the translation of Macquarrie and Robinson's *Being and Time* with some modifications.
2. On the centrality of intelligibility to Heidegger's later occupation with "*Ereignis*," see Thomas Sheehan, "On Movement and Destruction," *The Monist* 64 (October 1981), 536f.
3. By "Wittgensteinian," we mean interpretations that stress the linguistic and social dimensions of Dasein. The following works are representative of this interpretation: Karl-Otto Apel, "Wittgenstein und Heidegger. Die Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein und der Sinnlosigkeitsverdacht gegen alle Metaphysik," in Otto Pöggeler (ed.), *Heidegger* (Königstein: Athenäum, 1984), 358–396; Robert Brandom, "Heidegger's Categories in *Being and Time*," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 45–64; Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1991); Charles Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983); John Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person" in Dreyfus and Hall, *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, 1–26.
4. Heidegger's "*Rede*" has been translated as "discourse," "discursiveness," "talk," and "telling." We shall translate it as "discourse" throughout.
5. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 111.
6. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 115.
7. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 118.
8. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 118, 126. For a very helpful discussion of the constitutive view of language in later Heidegger, see Charles Guignon, "Heidegger: Language as the House of Being" in Chip Sills (ed.), *The Philosophy of Discourse* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1992), 163–187, esp. 177–183.
9. Heidegger: *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs: Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 20 (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979), 365; English trans. by Theodore Kisiel, *The History of the Concept of Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 265.
10. Heidegger, *Prolegomena*, p. 361; English trans., 262.
11. Dreyfus uses different words at different times. "Everyday" is sometimes replaced by the term "average." In place of "social," Dreyfus occasionally says "shared" (terms rarely employed by Heidegger) or "public." Dreyfus sometimes attaches to "practices" (rarely used by Heidegger) the word "background." For convenience, we stick to the phrase "everyday social practices."
12. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 154, 161.
13. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 154f., 161.
14. Dreyfus even goes so far as to identify "being" with "the intelligibility correlative with our everyday background practices." See *Being-in-the-World*, 10.
15. Frederick Olafson, "Heidegger *á la* Wittgenstein or 'Coping' with Professor Dreyfus," *Inquiry* 37 (1994): 45–64, here 55. On the differences between the interpretations of Dreyfus and Olafson, see Taylor Carman, "On Being Social: A Reply to Olafson," *Inquiry* 37 (1994): 203–223.
16. Olafson, "Heidegger *á la* Wittgenstein," 55.
17. On "deficient modes," see Klaus Hartmann, "The Logic of Deficient and Eminent Modes in Heidegger," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 5 (1974): 118–134 and David Weberman, *The Pragmatic Turn in Early Heidegger*, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1990, 23–29.





18. Olafson, "Heidegger *á la* Wittgenstein," 59.
19. See *Prolegomena*, 339f.; English trans. 246. For further passages supporting this interpretation, see Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 142–146.
20. Olafson misses the constitutive role of *das Man* when he writes in *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 146: "[T]he promise of the strong theory of *Mitsein* to which Heidegger commits himself in *Being and Time* is simply not realized. . . . Although it is understood that it is an essential feature of *Dasein* that the entities it uncovers are, at least in principle, the same entities in the same world that other like entities uncover, . . . there is no real account of the way in which *my* uncovering an entity as an entity depends on someone else's doing so as well." As discussed, the link between *my* and someone else's uncovering lies in the fact that we usually are *das Man* and have its understanding.
21. Heidegger's discussion of *das Man* in 1923, characterizes that notion *entirely* in negative terms of conformism. See Heidegger, *Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität): Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 63, (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988), 31f., 85f. On Heidegger's earliest deployment of the concept of *das Man* in his 1922 report to Paul Natorp, see Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 249f.
22. See SZ 370: In the preceding analyses we have often used the locution "first and for the most part." "First" signifies the way in which Dasein is "manifest" in the being with others of publicness, even if it has also "fundamentally" existentially "overcome" everydayness. "For the most part" signifies the way in which Dasein shows itself for anyone, not always, but "as a rule."
23. On this distinction, see also Joseph Fell, "The Familiar and the Strange" in Dreyfus and Hall, *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, 66 and Weberman, *The Pragmatic Turn*, 64–87.
24. Heidegger often speaks of *das Man* as something which we can "bring ourselves back from" (*Sichzurückholen*) (SZ 268) or out of which we can be summoned (*sich-aufrufen-lassen aus . . .*) (SZ 299), further confirming that Heidegger sees an alternative to the ways of *das Man*.
25. This interpretation was first developed by Charles Guignon. See his analysis in "Heidegger's 'Authenticity' Revisited," *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (December, 1984): 321–339 especially 329–330. For evidence in support of this reading, see SZ 268, 299, 308, and 297f.: "To this lostness [in *das Man*] one's own Dasein can appeal, and this appeal can be understood in the way of resoluteness. But in that case this *authentic* disclosedness modifies both the way in which the 'world' is disclosed and the way in which the Dasein with of others is disclosed. The 'world' . . . does not become another one 'in its content, nor does the circle of others get exchanged for a new one; but both . . . are now given a definite character in terms of their ownmost potentiality-for-being-them-selves."
26. The point is not that we could ever peel off or set aside everydayness and *das Man* and find a source of intelligibility that would provide wholly different concepts and practices. Rather we are saying that *das Man* gives rise to one-sided, distortional and limiting levelling tendencies that can be corrected by appeal to *other* sources of intelligibility.
27. See Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 353. While Dreyfus acknowledges that Division II of SZ might appear to contradict this assertion, we contend that the limited of everydayness and *das Man* is already clearly indicated in Division I.
28. Our thanks to Taylor Carman for this point.
29. See SZ 230 where care is described as "the primordial structure of the being of Dasein" ("*die ursprüngliche Seinsverfassung des Daseins*") and *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, 406ff.

30. Heidegger, *Prolegemonena*, 421, English trans. xxx.
31. Interpreters differ as to whether Heidegger's analysis of originary temporality provides an account of all modes of existence or only authentic modes. We are inclined to agree with Blattner that originary temporality underlies all instances of care, authentic and inauthentic. See William D. Blattner, "Existential Temporality in *Being and Time* (Why Heidegger is not a Pragmatist)" in Dreyfus and Hall, *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, 99–129.
32. See also SZ 301, 323, 326. We agree with Margot Fleischer's rejection of Heidegger's claim that his Division II discussion of temporality is necessitated by Division I's failure to treat Dasein and its care structure as a totality (*Ganzheit*). We would argue however (concurring with Dahlstrom's response to Fleischer) that the discussion of temporality does add to Division I by showing how temporality is presupposed by and integral to Heidegger's concept of care. See Margot Fleischer, *Die Zeitanalysen in Heideggers "Sein und Zeit." Aporien, Probleme und ein Ausblick* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1991) and Daniel O. Dahlstrom, "Heidegger's Concept of Temporality," *Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1995): 95–115.
33. Heidegger, *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit: Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 410. See also *Prolegomena*, 442, English trans. 319.
34. For a probing and original discussion of Heidegger's concept of *Gewesenheit* and how it replaces the conventional notion of the past, see Thomas Sheehan, "How (Not) to Read Heidegger," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXIX (1995): 275–294.
35. See Pierre Keller, "Heidegger's Critique of the Vulgar Notion of Time," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 4 (1996): 43–66 and Sheehan, "How (Not) to Read Heidegger."
36. Heidegger, *Logik*, 403.
37. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), §§17–18.
38. Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie: Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 24 (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), 452f.; English trans. by Albert Hofstadter, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 318.
39. Heidegger, *Grundprobleme*, 456f.; English trans. 321.
40. Heidegger, *Grundprobleme* 463; English trans. 325.
41. For more discussion of temporality as the source of intelligibility, see Pierre Keller, *Husserl, Heidegger and Human Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
42. We would like to thank Taylor Carman, Charles Guignon, Sabina Knight, Robert Scharff and two anonymous referees of this journal for valuable suggestions on earlier drafts.



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# *Social Constraints on Conversational Content: Heidegger on* Rede *and* Gerede

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## I. INTRODUCTION

What role does one's community play in determining one's meaning—in fixing the content of what is available to individual members of that community to do or to say? Heidegger, for one, has argued that our activities are heavily constrained by social factors. We always act within a public realm, which is already organized and interpreted in a determinate way. As a consequence, Heidegger explains, we are "constantly delivered over to this interpretedness, which controls and distributes the possibilities" available to us for action.[1] Indeed, Heidegger argues that our being "delivered over" to the public interpretation of things is an inescapable feature of human existence. What is true of action in general is also true for our use of language. Heidegger claims that in language itself there is hidden an "understanding of the disclosed world."[2] So not just our possibilities for practical engagement with the things and people around us, but even the possible range of what we can say is subject in some way to others.

One consequence of social constraints on language, Heidegger believes, is a tendency on the part of speakers to fall into a superficial imitation of the

kinds of things that others in their linguistic community say. He calls such speech *Gerede*, which is generally translated as "idle talk." *Gerede* is the everyday mode of *Rede*, which is generally translated as "discourse." For reasons to be explained later, I will translate *Rede* as "conversation," and *Gerede* as "idle conversation." Heidegger tells us that in idle conversation, one understands things "only approximately and superficially"; "one does not so much understand those entities about which one converses [*das beredete Seiende*], but rather one listens only to what is said in the conversation as such [*das Geredete als solches*]."[3] Or, as he puts it elsewhere, this kind of idle conversation "releases one from the task of true understanding."[4]

Because Heidegger believes that idle conversation is a pervasive phenomenon, he is often taken to hold that language itself is essentially and necessarily limited to public norms of understanding and interpretation. Because our language is constrained by social factors, the argument goes, we are forced to express things that are either banal or untrue whenever we use language. For example, Hubert Dreyfus attributes to Heidegger the view that "language by its very structure leads Dasein away from a primordial relation to being and to its own being."[5] Taylor Carman also argues that, because the public form of discourse is necessarily banalized, and because public language "provides the only vocabulary in which interpretation can in fact proceed," the inevitable result of language use is a fallen form of understanding: "There is no alternative to expressing and communicating one's understanding in the given idiom of one's social and cultural milieu. To make sense of oneself at all is to make sense of oneself on the basis of the banal, indeed flattened out and leveled off, language of *das Man*."[6]

In this paper, I explain Heidegger's view about the role of a community in determining or constraining linguistic meaning. In the course of doing this, I will argue against the view that Dreyfus and Carman, among others, attribute to Heidegger by demonstrating that language is not responsible for the banalizing and leveling of everyday human modes of existence. To the contrary, there are for Heidegger social constraints on meaning only because meaningful activities are inextricably caught up in a social world. But this fact in and of itself does not entail that any public use of language will be driven to banalization. Instead, the leveling and banalization that occurs is a result of the fact that all our practices are implicated in a network of social activities and concerns—activities which no individual can master, and concerns about which no individual can get clear. Nevertheless, once idle conversation is properly understood, we will see that Heidegger is not committed to the view that conversational content is necessarily subject to public norms. Although the interpenetration of practices means that it is possible to use language to talk about things we do not genuinely understand, it does not mean that we have to do so.

In an earlier article, I argued that philosophy stands to benefit from the



ability to read past the boundaries of "analytic" or "Continental" philosophy.[7] In the spirit of that argument, I will begin by comparing Heidegger's analysis of the social constraints on meaning with arguments made for social externalism in analytic philosophy. Philosophers like Putnam, Burge, and Dummett have worked out a detailed explanation of how the content of our thoughts, beliefs, and words is determined at least in part by things external to us, including the social context in which words come to have the meaning that they have.[8] An understanding of these arguments provides a helpful background for examining Heidegger's view.

The social externalists tell us that the meaning of a particular utterance is determined by the language in which it is uttered. So we can make a meaningful utterance in the sense of saying something that can be understood by a competent speaker of the language, without ourselves knowing much about the thing of which we speak, or without knowing what our words are taken to mean. This consequence of the externalist view—i.e., that the speakers of a language often lack a genuine understanding of the things they are saying—might, on the face of it, seem like a promising basis for justifying Heidegger's claim that *Gerede*, idle conversation, is a pervasive phenomenon. I shall ultimately argue, however, that this is not how Heidegger understands idle conversation. The analytic discussion of social externalism is nevertheless illuminating, if only to show how Heidegger's account of idle conversation should *not* be construed. In fact, I believe the comparison does more than that. It also helps us see how limited the consequences of *Gerede* are for understanding the essential features of linguistic communication in general.

## II. SETTING THE STAGE: SOCIAL EXTERNALISM

One traditional view of the influence of a linguistic community on an individual's meaning denies that there is any essential influence at all—that is, it insists that what those around me mean by their words or imagine my words to mean has no bearing on the meaning of what I say. What I mean when I speak is entirely dependent on what I intend to say, and what I intend to say is determined by what I know—not by what those around me know. In other words, what I can express is restricted to what, on the basis of my personal history, I could intend to mean. What others know cannot figure in understanding what I intend to say (although I will, of course, often find it useful to speak in the way that I believe others would speak). My words are thus to be understood without any necessary reference to the linguistic community to which I belong.

Externalists, in contrast, take the view that, to quote Putnam's now-famous phrase, "'meanings' just ain't in the *head*."[9] Putnam's pioneering

argument for this proceeds by trying to demonstrate, through a variety of hypothetical examples, that two traditional internalist theses about meaning are incompatible. These theses are:

> 1. "That knowing the meaning of a term is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state;" and
> 2. "That the meaning of a term (in the sense of 'intension') determines its extension."[10]

From these two theses, it would seem to follow that the psychological state associated with knowing the meaning of a term determines the extension of that term. But, according to Putnam, there are cases in which, given differing conditions external to the psychological state of the speaker, the same psychological state will determine different extensions. If that is true, then there must be more to knowing the meaning of a term than being in a given psychological state.

One set of examples to which Putnam alludes in demonstrating that "inner" psychological states are not sufficient to determine extension are cases arising from what he calls the "social division of linguistic labor." There are many instances in which it is useful for us to acquire a word for something without also acquiring an expertise in recognizing if something genuinely belongs to the extension of the word. We leave this work to others, thus dividing the "linguistic labor":

> The features that are generally thought to be present in connection with a general name—necessary and sufficient conditions for membership in the extension, ways of recognizing if something is in the extension ("criteria"), etc.—are all present in the linguistic community *considered as a collective body*; but that collective body divides the "labor" of knowing and employing these various parts of the "meaning."[11]

Putnam cites such examples as a given individual's confusion over the difference between beeches and elms, or between aluminum and molybdenum, or an inability to determine the exact extension of "gold." Putnam claims that for any English speaker the extension of such terms will be the same, regardless of how rich or impoverished that speaker's understanding of the extension of the term might be. Of course, the poorer my concept of an elm is, the more likely I am to make mistaken claims and hold mistaken beliefs about the elm. But because the extension of the term is determined by other, more competent speakers of English than I, it is possible for me to make illuminating, useful, and even true claims about elms without knowing much at all about them.

In a series of articles,[12] Burge has argued along similar lines that the content of our intentional states is at least partly determined by the language and concepts of the people with whom we interact—language and concepts



of which we often have, at best, an incomplete understanding. Thus, according to Burge, we can think things and say things without necessarily knowing what we think and mean.

Like Putnam, Burge begins with the supposition that meaning determines extension. Consequently, if two terms have different extensions, they must also express different meanings. The problem is that, for a variety of reasons, any given individual is often unable to fix the extension of a term. Even if individuals are capable of articulating a term's meaning, thereby explicating the basis on which things are included in or excluded from its extension, they often lack the present ability to do so. For instance, we often have a precognitive familiarity with examples of a certain kind of thing without having conceptualized on what basis the examples count as the kind of thing that we take them to be. Perhaps, despite all our experience with insects and arachnids, we have never really thought about what makes us class ants with bees but not with spiders. Or it may be that we lack the sort of direct experience with the things in question that would allow us to clarify our conception of what it takes to count as such a thing—perhaps we think of mammals as furry, land-dwelling creatures because we have never come across whales. Or it could be that we have developed only the discriminatory capacities and abilities made relevant by our current normal environment, but lack the ability to discriminate between things which belong and do not belong in the extension in non-normal environments. Imagine the difficulty for someone raised in the United States of categorizing all the creatures one encounters in Australia. In all such cases, Burge argues, our ability to determine the extension of our words and concepts is inferior to that of the people we recognize as experts concerning those concepts. But this does not justify us in the belief that we mean something different by these words than the experts. To the contrary, Burge contends, we hold ourselves responsible to the words and concepts as they are understood in our community. When we lack the ability to determine the extension of certain terms and concepts on our own, we defer to others who possess the ability. There are thus many instances in which we depend on others to determine our content for us.

Our recognition of this dependence, Burge points out, is readily manifest in our willingness to stand corrected by others in the meaning of our words. Burge would claim that this is not a matter of having others foist their meanings on us. Rather, we are willing to stand corrected because we recognize that we speak the same language as the experts do, and they understand portions of our common language better than we do. Or we recognize that, in many instances, we rely on the experts for our access to the examples on which our understanding of our words and concepts is based. There is thus good reason for accepting correction from them in the explication of our concepts and words:

> Our explicational abilities, and indeed all our cognitive mastery, regarding the referents of such words and concepts do not necessarily fix the referents. Nor therefore . . . do they necessarily fix the translational meanings or concepts associated with the words. . . . Others are often in a better position to arrive at a correct articulation of our word or concept, because they are in a better position to determine relevant empirical features of the referents. . . . Since the referents play a necessary role in individuating the person's concept or translational meaning, individuation of an individual's concepts or translational meanings may depend on the activity of others on whom the individual is dependent for acquisition of and access to the referents. If the others by acting differently had put one in touch with different referents, compatibly with one's minimum explicational abilities, one would have had different concepts or translational meanings.[13]

It follows that we sometimes intend to be understood in a way that we do not ourselves understand.

The plausibility of these social externalist arguments hinges entirely on the extent to which the examples they use convince us that a proper understanding of the speaker's meaning requires a necessary reference to others in her linguistic community. To better appraise the social externalist argument, therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the examples more closely. The examples as Putnam and Burge typically present them fail to carefully distinguish between those speakers who know the subject matter well, but who do not fully understand what others refer to with their terms, and those who know neither. For instance, in Burge's example of a man with arthritis, the man in question knows the following kinds of things about his arthritis:

> he thinks (correctly) that he has had arthritis for years, that his arthritis in his wrists and fingers is more painful than his arthritis in his ankles, that it is better to have arthritis than cancer of the liver, that stiffening joints is a symptom of arthritis, that certain sorts of aches are characteristic of arthritis, that there are various kinds of arthritis, and so forth.[14]

The man does not know that "informed" members of his speech community use the term "arthritis" to refer to an inflammation of a joint. Presumably, the man also does not know (although Burge is not explicit on this point) that his pain is caused by an inflammation of the joints. But this distinction—between not knowing some fact about the object in question and not knowing how others refer to that fact—is a crucial distinction to draw if we are correctly to understand what the speaker means to say when, to take Burge's hypothetical example, he says things like "I've developed arthritis in my thigh."

To help see the importance of drawing this distinction, I want to set out a couple of my own examples—examples that I have tailored to highlight the important features of these kinds of situations.



First example. Until I built my own house, I thought that a gable was a kind of peaked roof, and consequently I believed that the phrase "gable roof" was redundant. It was only while constructing the gables on my house that I discovered that a gable is not actually a roof, but rather the triangular exterior wall section bounded by the roof rafters. A gable roof is, in fact, a roof that ends in a gable. Of course, this was a difficult mistake to correct since what I thought was a gable was in almost all instances adjoined by a gable, meaning that my improper use was as difficult for others to detect as their proper use was for me. As a result, even though I did not know what the term "gable" actually meant, many (if not most) of the utterances in which I used the term were understood by others in a way which was appropriate under the circumstances, if not actually true in a literal sense. So, while I had no particular misconceptions about the matters being talked about—I did not, for instance, ever think a wall was a roof—I did lack a proper understanding of the way the term "gable" is typically used.

Second example. When ordering a new computer last week, I told the computer purchasing agent at the university that I wanted an extra 128 megabytes of RAM for the computer. Although I know that "RAM" is an acronym for "random access memory," and I have actually installed RAM in my laptop before, I do not really understand what it is or how it works. I do, however, have a vague sense that, in general, a computer with more RAM works better than a computer with less RAM, and this was enough to allow me to say sensible things to the computer purchasing agent about it. Nevertheless, my use of the term was limited in important ways. For instance, I would be unable on my own to determine the extension of my term "RAM" with any degree of precision. Moreover, there is a comparatively small set of inferences I could draw from any particular claim about RAM—much smaller, for instance, than a computer expert could draw.

Now, the issue is, what do such examples teach us about social constraints on linguistic meaning? Let me briefly review. These two different examples are intended to illustrate two different senses in which information available to a speaker underdetermines the meaning of the speaker's utterance (or at least the meaning it has for an informed audience). In the first example, the speaker lacks information about how other speakers of the language determine the extension of a term. We assume, however, that the speaker is competent to determine the extension of the term as he himself uses it. In the second example, the speaker lacks even this much—he is unable on his own to determine the extension of the term either as he uses it or as others use it. In addition, or perhaps as a consequence, the speaker also is very constrained in his understanding of the inferential relations his utterance would bear to other possible utterances.[15]

To the extent that Putnam and Burge rely on cases like my "gable" example, it is not clear that they are entitled to draw any conclusions about

social constraints on meaning. This is because, given my ignorance of the way others use the term "gable," we can plausibly take me to refer to a gable when I say "gable" only if we already have some compelling reason to hold me accountable to the way that others are using their words. Burge's point that I depend on others for my access to the referents of the term does not hold in this case. And, as Davidson has pointed out, without a compelling reason, it would not be good policy to hold me to a meaning of which I am not aware.[16] As a consequence, where Burge takes my readiness to alter my use of "gable" to accord with community norms as evidence that we hold ourselves responsible to the public language, Davidson sees me as employing a pragmatic flexibility in altering my mode of speech to accommodate my listeners. That is, on Davidson's account, I should be seen as shifting my usage simply to avoid confusion on the part of my hearers (deeming it easier to do so than to preface my remarks about gable roofs with an explanation to the effect that I idiosyncratically refer to them as "gables"). But this willingness to shift one's use of terms does not change the fact that knowing how the speaker intends for her words to be understood is the most important factor in understanding a speaker. Of course, a speaker cannot reasonably intend for her words to be understood in a way that she knows the hearers cannot understand. A wise speaker will often adopt, as a pragmatic strategy, the use of words that she believes is common in the linguistic community. But there is nothing intrinsic to successful language use that requires her to do so. And it would have been manifestly wrong, before I got clear about how other speakers use the term, to say of me: "Wrathall thinks that gable there is covered with asphalt shingles, but anyone can see it is made of brick." The right thing to say would be: "Wrathall says the gable is covered with asphalt shingles, but he thinks a gable is a gable roof."

But what of cases like my "RAM" example? In such cases, I speak with the intention of taking advantage of the division of linguistic labor. And if one were to set out to radically interpret the things I say about RAM, it is not clear how much content one could attribute to me given that I know so little about the subject matter. In such cases, what is said can only have a determinate content by appealing to someone else's knowledge of the subject matter. The right way to interpret me—that is, the way I want to be interpreted—is to see me as using "RAM" in the way computer experts do. I would in fact be misunderstood if the interpretation restricted itself to my own pallid understanding of computers. It would be manifestly wrong, for instance, for the purchasing agent to conclude: "Wrathall says he wants more RAM, but he'll settle for anything that improves the performance of the computer."

Now the question is, will it help us to see Heidegger's "idle conversation" in terms of my "RAM" example—that is, in terms of those instances



where we surrender to others our authority over the meaning of what we say? Before directly comparing Heidegger's account of idle conversation to Putnam's account of the social division of linguistic labor, or Burge's argument for our dependence on others in determining the content of our words, let me make a couple of observations.

First, as Putnam notes, it is not a necessary feature of language that meaning be determined by experts: "some words do not exhibit any division of linguistic labor."[17] Putnam's example is "chair": many others are easily imaginable. The point is that for many things in our world, everyone (or almost everyone) is competent not just in the use of the word, but in recognizing the thing. The linguistic division of labor is driven by the demands of efficiency, not by the very structure of language itself. Putnam provides no reasons for thinking that there could be no language in which speakers spoke only about those things of which they had a sufficient understanding. Similarly, Burge argues that the social character of language is a psychological rather than conceptual necessity, which is to say that there is nothing in Burge's account that requires that meaning be socially determined. One way to see this is to note that the very fact that some in a linguistic community rely on others to fix the extension of their terms shows that not everyone can fail to know what they are talking about. There are necessarily some people in the community—the experts—who do not rely on others to fix the extension.[18] Language can function, and often does function, therefore, without any essential reference to the way in which the community at large understands a term.

Thus, considerations of the sort that Putnam and Burge advance will not support the strong conclusion about the structural necessity of *Gerede* that people like Dreyfus and Carman see in Heidegger. At best, they would support an empirical or psychological claim to the effect that idle conversation is in fact pervasive.

Second, even in examples like the "RAM" case, nothing about Putnam's or Burge's arguments supports the drive toward leveling and banalization that Heidegger finds in *Gerede*. As already noted, the idea that some people do not fully understand what they're talking about only makes sense, for both Putnam and Burge, on the assumption that others do. In other words, it may be true that, in some cases, many or even most of the speakers of a language do not know what they mean. But they can get away with it precisely because some (the experts) *do* know. For both Putnam and Burge, then, public language is not leveled down to an average understanding—to the contrary, it preserves a genuine understanding because its content is determined by what the experts think, not by what the public at large can think.

With these notes in the background, we can begin to see why the Putnam/Burge account of the social division of linguistic labor is not what

Heidegger has in mind with his notion of idle conversation. What is crucial to Heidegger's account is *not* the speaker's ability or inability to determine the extension of her terms, or even to see what is entailed by her utterances. Rather, Heidegger sees both these kinds of failings on the speaker's part as derived from her lack of experience with the objects, and the situations in which the objects are typically found. That lack of experience, and the corresponding lack of sensibility that such experience fosters, is the real source of idle conversation.

To illustrate this point, I offer a third example of a kind of disparity between what a speaker can express and what a speaker understands about the subject of her expression. This will orient us to the way Heidegger's concern differs from the kind of linguistic incompetence on which Putnam and Burge focus. The U.K. Department of the Environment, Transport, and Regions issues the following instructions on using a roundabout:

> On approaching a roundabout take notice and act on all the information available to you, including traffic signs, traffic lights and lane markings which direct you into the correct lane. You should . . .
> - decide as early as possible which exit you need to take
> - give an appropriate signal. Time your signals so as not to confuse other road users
> - get into the correct lane
> - adjust your speed and position to fit in with traffic conditions
> - be aware of the speed and position of all the traffic around you.
>
> When reaching the roundabout you should
> - give priority to traffic approaching from your right, unless directed otherwise by signs, road markings or traffic lights
> - check whether road markings allow you to enter the roundabout without giving way. If so, proceed, but still look to the right before joining
> - watch out for vehicles already on the roundabout: be aware they may not be signalling correctly or at all
> - look forward before moving off to make sure traffic in front has moved off.[9]

I consider myself a competent driver, and I am conversant both in the use of all the terms employed in these rules of the highway code and in the operation of an automobile. Nevertheless, my brief experience with driving in Britain has convinced me that there is an important sense in which I do not really understand what I am being told to do when directed, for instance, to "adjust your speed and position to fit in with traffic conditions," or to "get into the correct lane," or to "be aware of the speed and position of the traffic around you." In saying that I do not really understand these things, I do not mean either that I would not use the terms in the same way that the highway code does, or that I do not understand what those directions are directing me to do. Instead, I mean that, in virtue of my lack of experience in navigating roundabouts in Britain, those directions give me, at best, an approximate and superficial sense for what I would need to do if I found myself in that situation. If I were now, on the basis of having read those guidelines, to instruct a colleague on driving in preparation for her upcoming trip to London, I would be engaging in idle conversation because I would, in an important respect, lack understanding about that of which I spoke. Unlike the previous examples, however, I am not ignorant of either how other speakers use their words, or how to go about determining the extension of my own words. What precisely it is that I lack needs further elaboration—a project to which I will return. But whatever it is, I believe it is best understood on the basis of Heidegger's account of *Gerede*. Before expanding further on this example, therefore, I turn to a more exegetical discussion of Heidegger's account of idle conversation.

## III. LANGUAGE, CONVERSATION, AND IDLE CONVERSATION

To understand Heidegger's account of idle conversation, *Gerede*, we need to start with his account of conversation, or *Rede*. Let me begin with a review of the role played by conversation in Heidegger's overall account of being-in-the-world.

Conversation is one of the constitutive moments of the disclosedness of the world. A world is disclosed when we have a background readiness to act in ways which make sense, i.e., which give unity and coherence to our activities in the world. In saying that disclosing is a *background* readiness, I'm trying to emphasize that it is not any particular active engagement with the people and things around us. Heidegger calls the way in which particular activities open up a relation to things in the world "discovering" to distinguish it from the background readiness that is disclosure. When I say that disclosing is a kind of background *readiness*, I mean to distinguish it from a mere capacity or ability to do something. To illustrate this distinction, imagine someone fluent in both German and English, but who has never had any exposure to Finnish. We might say of this person that she has a (mere) capacity to understand Finnish, but is able—has an ability—to understand German and English. In addition, when in the United States, she will ordinarily be ready to hear English, but not German. Indeed, if someone began speaking German to her, it might actually take a moment before she understood what was being said. My claim is, in short, that Heidegger's concept of disclosure is meant to demonstrate how our active response to things and people in the world around us is made possible by a readiness for the things that ordinarily show up in the world. Heidegger believes that if we want to understand the way humans are in a world, we first need to recognize the

importance of this kind of readiness in priming us for the particular activities in which one typically engages in that world.

One of the key features in constituting any particular form of readiness for the world is mood, the ontic mode of disposedness. Disposedness makes us ready for things by determining in advance how they will matter to us:

> Being-in as such has been determined existentially beforehand in such a manner that what it encounters within-the-world can *"matter" to* it in this way. The fact that this sort of thing can "matter" to it is grounded in one's disposedness. . . . *Existentially, disposedness implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us.*[20]

For example, as Heidegger notes, one consequence of being in a mood of fear is that things in the world tend to matter to us insofar as they are threatening.

Another key feature in the constitution of readiness is our understanding—our knowing how to do things, knowing what is appropriate, necessary, what makes sense, etc. A particular kind of readiness has the "shape" it does in virtue of the ontic appropriation of the understanding in an interpretation. As I understand it, in interpretation we appropriate an overall understanding of the world by deciding which things are appropriate or necessary for *us*, make sense for *us*. Once we reach such a decision, we are ready to undertake particular actions in response to the situation that confronts us. For instance, I have a background understanding of a variety of pieces of equipment and equipmental contexts—things like chalkboards and classrooms, airplanes and airports, jigsaws and wood shops. I also have a background understanding of a variety of human activities and identities—writing on a board and being a teacher, reading what is written on a board and being a student, erasing what is on the board and being a janitor, etc. When I act in the world on the basis of my understanding of objects, activities, contexts, and identities, my action both decides for me how all those worldly things will line up with one another, and expresses an understanding of those things and activities and contexts and identities by actualizing the way in which they stand in a totality of significance. Thus, when I draw a chart on a chalkboard in a classroom, the action is not just a communicative action; it is also an action in which I interpret myself and the world around me in a teacherly way. In this way, the action looks beyond the communicative intention toward a "future" realization of an identity through which I interpret the world around me. This action is opened up for me, in other words, by a background understanding of the kind of things teachers do, together with my interpretation of the world around me in terms of my being a teacher.

Finally, any particular readiness is correlated with the particular activities in which we are absorbed, such absorption being the ontic mode of falling. When I am in the classroom teaching a class, for instance, I am ready for classroom events. I would not be ready for, say, one of the people seated in the class to come spontaneously to the board while I'm talking and erase what I have written. But the same act would not strike me as at all strange if I were absorbed in a different sort of activity, such as preparing the classroom for my next lecture.

In disclosedness, then, a world is opened up for us in the sense that we have a coherent way of being ready to respond to whatever we encounter as we go about our business. The role of conversation, Heidegger explains, is the articulation of this readiness: "The complete disclosedness of the there—a disclosedness which is constituted through understanding, disposedness, and falling—is articulated through conversation."[21]

Although one might hear a phrase like "articulated through conversation" as denoting an explicit, verbal explication of something, this is not primarily what Heidegger has in mind. Indeed, my reason for preferring "conversation" to "discourse" as a translation for *Rede* is that the English term and its cognates still bear something of the original connotation of living with, having intercourse with, or being engaged with a person or thing. The Latin root, *versor*, has the sense of dwelling, living, or remaining in a place. In the participle, it has the sense of busying oneself with or being engaged in something. The notion of a verbal conversation is, in its original English use, just one species of the broader sense of living with or being involved together with others in some activity. That "conversation" has come to be limited to verbal interaction is a natural evolution, I suppose, given that one of the primary forms of human involvement with others is that of linguistic discourse. The earlier, broader sense is still present in English terms like "conversance"—being conversant with, i.e., knowing how to deal with something or someone—but even a "conversation" was once understood in nonlinguistic terms, as the King James Translation of the Bible readily attests. I cite a single example: St. Peter advised the Christian wives of unbelieving husbands to set an example of faith for their husbands without preaching to them, so that their husbands "may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."[22]

It is precisely the idea of an engagement with things and people—an engagement that can occur "without the word"—that Heidegger means to capture with the notion of *Rede*. Even when conversing or conversation is linguistic in form, the emphasis should not be on the conveyance of thoughts or ideas from inside one agent to another. Rather, the linguistic form conversation takes is but one aspect of a practical engagement with one another. Once again, I find this idea delightfully depicted by an earlier English usage—this time, in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver,

in describing his stay with the horse-like Houyhnhnms, recalls that: "By conversing with the Houyhnhnms, and looking upon them with Delight, I fell to imitate their Gait and Gesture, which is now grown into a Habit; and my friends often tell me in a blunt Way, that *I trot like a Horse*; which, however, I take for a great compliment."[23] Such conversing with others, in which we learn not merely linguistic conventions, but also all our forms of practical comportment, is precisely what I take Heidegger to mean in saying that conversation is the articulation of disclosedness.

When Heidegger writes of articulation in general, for instance, he notes that

> our comportments, lived experiences taken in the broadest sense, are through and through *expressed* [*ausgedrückte*] experiences; even if they are not uttered in words, they are nonetheless expressed in a definite articulation by an understanding that I have of them as I simply live in them without regarding them thematically.[24]

That is to say, in simply living and doing things in accordance with the structure of significance projected by a world, we articulate the way people and things have been coordinated into meaningful forms of interaction. For instance, in "conversing" with a workshop—in being engaged with the workshop in such a way that one's very mannerisms and habits are shaped by the activities in which one is engaged—two things happen. First, the objects in the workshop become manifest in terms of their use within the workshop: "*conversation is conversation about something*, such that the *about which* becomes manifest in the conversation. This becoming manifest . . . for all that does not need to become known expressly and thematically."[25] Second, as we become conversant in the workshop, thereby modifying in concrete terms our readiness for the world (which is disclosive comportment), that world becomes available for an interpretive appropriation, and thereby for assertion:

> Conversation is existentially equiprimordial with disposedness and understanding. The intelligibility of something has always been articulated, even before there is any appropriative interpretation of it. Conversation is the Articulation of intelligibility. Therefore it underlies both interpretation and assertion. That which can be Articulated in interpretation, and thus even more primordially in conversation, is what we have called "meaning." That which gets articulated as such in conversing Articulation, we call the "totality-of-significations" [*Bedeutungsganze*]. This can be dissolved or broken up into significations. Significations, as what has been Articulated from that which can be Articulated, always carry meaning [*sind . . . sinnhaft*]. . . . The intelligibility of Being-in-the-world—an intelligibility which goes with disposedness—*expresses itself as conversation*. The totality-of-significations of intelligibility is *put into words*. To significations, words accrue.[26]



It is here that we can see most clearly that the Putnam/Burge mode of arguing for the necessarily social character of meaning is inapplicable to Heidegger—at least as a constitutive structure of being-in-the-world. Meaning is prior to language, for Heidegger, in the sense that what others say about us, and indeed what we say about ourselves, depends on our prior meaningful engagement with the world. It thus cannot be the case that the meanings things hold for us, including our expressions, are structurally dependent on a public language.

But this is not to deny that social features play an important role in determining the kind of meaning that is available to us. To see this, we turn at last to an analysis of *Gerede*—idle conversation.

*Gerede* in Heidegger's account is the everyday mode of conversation. The turn of phrase "idle talk" used in most English translations of Heidegger is actually quite fortuitous as a translation, in that *Gerede* differs from *Rede* precisely in being a particular kind of idleness, that is, in holding back from a practical engagement with the things being discussed. But as a reminder that *Gerede* does not necessarily take the form of talk or linguistic speech any more than *Rede* does, and to keep in mind the structural identity between *Rede* and *Gerede*, I translate the latter as the somewhat non-idiomatic "idle conversation" (hoping, of course, that "conversation" retains some echoes of its archaic English use).

Conversation, and a fortiori idle conversation, has four constitutive parts. Two are concerned with what we might call the content of the conversation: that with which the conversation is concerned [*das Beredete*], and that which is understood in the conversation [*das Geredete*]. The other two constitutive parts of conversation refer to what is done in conversation: communication [*die Mitteilung*], and making manifest [*die Bekundung*].

Starting with the latter two, it is important to note that Heidegger does not mean for communication to be understood in the first instance as linguistic communication:

> It is letting someone see with us what we have pointed out by way of giving it a definite character. Letting someone see with us shares with [*teilt . . . mit*] the Other that entity which has been pointed out in its definite character. That which is "shared" is our *Being towards* what has been pointed out—a Being in which we see it in common.[27]

In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger coins the phrase "existential communication" [*existenzielle Mitteilung*], by which he means sharing a form of comportment toward things in the world. He thereby differentiates the communication involved in conversation from merely linguistic communication.[28] While I'm not aware of any other passages where Heidegger uses this phrase, I will adopt it here as a reminder that communication should not be understood as primarily linguistic. In noting that this sort of communication is a constitutive feature of conversation, Heidegger

means to say that we are made ready for an engagement with people and things in our world by sharing with others a mode of understanding comportment toward the common things we encounter in the world.

Where existential communication brings us into a state of sharing a common understanding with our partners in conversation, "making manifest" [*Bekundung*] shares with others our mode of disposedness, and hence expresses our sense for the way things matter.[29]

The remaining two constituents of conversation are that about which we converse [*das Beredete*], and the way in which we understand or relate to that thing [*das Geredete*]. *Das Geredete* is manifest in the way in which "that with which the conversation is concerned [*das Beredete*] is always, in conversation, 'talked to' in a definite regard and within certain limits."[30] In idle conversation, the manner in which we "address" ourselves to the thing (including what we are disposed to do with the thing or say about the thing) is shared with others, but there is no "primordial understanding"—no background familiarity with that thing—of the sort gained by familiarity with *das Beredete* itself.

What individual speakers lack and, consequently, what their community supplies for them in idle conversation is, then, decidedly *not* an ability to determinately fix the extension of our terms. In fact, in learning *das Geredete*—what is understood and said about the subject of the conversation—we may learn precisely how to define it, how to articulate its extension, and what other things are conventionally seen to follow from the kind of claims conventionally made about it. But, at the same time, we lack a sense for the way a conversance with the object primes us to respond to the world by showing us what is relevant in the current situation, given our self-understanding and self-interpretation. Without such a sense we would be practically disoriented, *un*ready to act, uncertain how to continue in our self-interpretation. And so in its place we orient ourselves to the situation by arrogating the things "one" says and "one" does. In the process, we surrender, at least for the moment, our own interpretation in favor of an anonymous interpretation of what is important and relevant here and now.

We can now see why neither the "RAM" nor the "gable" examples are well-suited for clarifying what is of interest to Heidegger in idle conversation. In both these examples, it is true, the speaker lacks a kind of expertise. But the "gable" example does not demonstrate a lack of conversance with gables—just a terminological confusion. The "RAM" example, on the other hand, is a rather extreme form of lack of conversance with a subject—in fact, too extreme to be a good example. The speaker lacks not only the kind of conversance that articulates his understanding and interpretation, but actually knows so little about the situation that he could get almost no practical grip on it at all. Instead, the example of my lack of conversance with driving in Britain is a much better way of homing in on the phenomenon with which Heidegger is concerned.



The driving example illustrates the difference between linguistic understanding and a practical conversance with a matter. It is possible to understand every sentence in the British Highway Code and still be ill-prepared for driving in Britain. To be at home on British roads and in British cars, one needs an altered receptivity to the world, a receptivity that will shift the significance of all kinds of features one encounters while driving. To begin with, British cars, being designed to drive on the left-hand side of the road, have controls (such as turn signals and gear shifters) on the opposite side of the steering column from their location in an American car, requiring them to be operated by the opposite hand. Other vehicles are in different places, and moving in different directions, than one typically finds them in the United States; an American driver will thus find herself intuitively looking in just the wrong places in her attempt to "be aware of the speed and position of all the traffic around you."[31] Finally, most Americans lack exposure to roundabouts, and have little sense for gauging distances, or judging when to yield, in such environments. Instructions such as those quoted above may help an American driver *think* about what she must do when she approaches a roundabout, but they will not help her to intuitively key in on the relevant features of the roundabout. For that, nothing can help but extensive experience in navigating through them.

It is precisely this kind of divergence between linguistic understanding and practical conversance that Heidegger aims to highlight with the notion of idle conversation. What we cannot convey, in idly discussing some thing or state of affairs, is the way an actual familiarity with a situation affects our general readiness for the world. If I am correct in this interpretation, then we can see that Heidegger is in fact not committed to the claim that there is something essential about linguistic expression which alienates us from an authentic understanding, or that it necessarily covers over the truth. Rather, language is guilty at most of a sin of omission—of failing to do something for our readiness for the world. In particular, if we converse idly, rather than become conversant with a situation, we settle for a public interpretation of what the situation calls for. Idle conversation thus "closes off" because it gives us a sort of understanding, but only by allowing us to evade the need to learn to respond authentically, in our own way, to the specific situation.

This explains why Heidegger sees our social interactions as tending toward a kind of fallenness. We gain through social and, in particular, linguistic interaction a richly articulated ability to isolate and discriminate features of the world of which we have little or no actual experience whatsoever. Idle conversation, by exploiting a ready-made sense for things, offers us the convenience of getting a certain (albeit anonymous) grasp on the circumstances. In fact, if one is already fairly skilled in the area of discussion, what is said is often enough to open up new possibilities for practical involvement in the world. But what is said is not, in and of itself, sufficient to convey what is relevant, given the particularities of the situation,

and thus does not convey to the listener the readiness for action that is necessary to genuinely disclose a world.

Heidegger uses the example of a scientist hearing of experimental results to illustrate both how idle conversation can be genuinely informative, and how it nevertheless is unable to convey a disclosive readiness. Idle conversation, Heidegger emphasizes, can take the form of "picking up" what is characteristically said of some matter through reading. This idly obtained conversance with a matter can even take place "in such a way that the reader—there are purported to be such readers in the sciences as well—acquires the possibility of dealing with the matters with great skill without ever having seen them." Although they have a certain kind of expertise, they lack what is crucial to an authentic disclosure:

> Accordingly, when men who have to deal with a matter do so solely on the basis of idle conversation about it, they bring the various opinions, views, and perceptions together on an equal basis. In other words, they do so on the basis of what they have picked up from reading and hearing. They pass along what they have read and heard about the matter *without any sensitivity for the distinction of whether or not that opinion or their own is actually relevant to the matter.* Their care in discovering does not apply to the matter but to the conversation.[32]

Scientists tend to fall into this kind of idle conversation, Heidegger observes later in an offhand note, whenever "there are no apparatuses and the like."[33] This note makes perfect sense in light of the idea that idle conversation is a kind of failure of conversance with what is being talked about, the point being that as much as we can learn from reading or hearing about experimental results, we are missing something crucial as long as we fail to conduct the experiment ourselves.

Heidegger's account of language is committed, then, to no more than the unsurprising view that language cannot give one a full conversance with its subject matter—the kind of conversance necessary for articulating an authentic space of disclosedness. This entails neither that (a) whenever we speak in a public language, we fail to communicate a genuine disclosedness of the world or discovery of that with which we cope, nor that (b) whenever we speak in a way which is amenable to be understood by others, what we are saying is untrue. Not (a), because one who does have a genuine conversance with things can speak and converse with another expert, who will have in addition to an understanding of *das Geredete*, a familiarity with *das Beredete*. By pointing out linguistically the relevant feature of the environment—the one relevant for those who possess a certain kind of expertise—the speaker can use language to trigger an appropriate response in the hearer: "These boards are splitting," one carpenter says to another, and she instantly begins hammering with a smaller nail. Not (b), because (as Davidson's criticism of social externalism makes clear) what we mean is not



altered by being spoken out loud. If anything, rather than constraining what its speaker can mean, idle conversation limits the ability of its hearer to understand since it allows her to imagine that she understands everything that she needs to know: "the conversation which is communicated can be understood to a considerable extent, even if the hearer does not bring himself into such a kind of Being towards what the discourse is about to have a primordial understanding of it."[34]

Idle conversation, in short, is a mode of engagement with people and things in which a genuine readiness is not cultivated. Heidegger calls the result a kind of "floating"—a failure to be grabbed or disposed in any way by the things we encounter:

> when Dasein maintains itself in idle conversation, it is—as Being-in-the-world—cut off from its primary and primordially genuine relationships-of-Being towards the world, towards Dasein-with, and towards its very Being-in. Such a Dasein keeps floating unattached [*in einer Schwebe*]; yet in so doing, it is always alongside the world, with Others, and towards itself.[35]

## IV. THE NECESSITY OF BANALIZATION, LEVELING, AND UNTRUTH

If my interpretation of idle conversation is right, one consequence is that Dreyfus and Carman are unjustified in seeing the very structure of language as necessitating the banalization and leveling of human existence. How do they reach this unjustified conclusion? It is because, like Putnam and Burge, they see individuals as responsible to public modes of discourse, a responsibility that consists in subjecting the content of one's own utterances to the domination of others. Or more precisely, they see Heidegger as an anti-Putnam—as holding that the meaning of what we say is determined not by the experts, but by the lowest common denominator of a linguistic community. It seems to me that this misses the real thrust of Heidegger's position.

Both Carman and Dreyfus make the mistake of thinking that everyday language, to function, must be available to everybody. Dreyfus writes, for instance, that language is "necessarily public and general, that is, meant to be used by anyone, skilled or not, as a tool for communication."[36] Because language requires such generality and universality, they suppose that it cannot possibly capture all the particularities of a situation. This, in turn, allows them to conclude that the moment we employ a public language, we fall into a banalized and leveled understanding of the world.

But what justifies the assumption that what is said in language must be available to everyone? Like Putnam, Dreyfus appeals to a division of labor—the meaning of our utterances is reduced to a "generality that tends

towards banality" dictated by the need for "the diversity and specialization characteristic of the equipmental whole."[37] The idea seems to be that it is a useful thing to be able to talk about all kinds of equipment—all the equipment that makes up our world—but it is not possible for everyone to acquire a primordial understanding of all that equipment. This much is quite right—indeed, it is compatible with the interpretation of Heidegger that I am advancing.

But it does not follow from this that our words can only mean what anyone in our linguistic community can understand them to mean. From the fact that we are not conversant with everything we can talk about, it does not follow that we can only intend to say what anyone and everyone is capable of understanding. As Putnam and Burge have shown, the premise of a social division of labor, if anything, tends in the opposite direction. What we should say, then, is that speakers are often misunderstood by some members of the community, not that a speaker can only mean what anyone can understand her to mean. As a matter of fact, language communicates perfectly well in situations where what it communicates is inaccessible to almost everyone—as most work in philosophy attests. A good language user aims her use to her actual listeners, not every conceivable member of the linguistic community. Of course, something uttered can always be misconstrued by those incapable of understanding the assertion as it is intended, but this possibility does not change what the speaker means by her words. And so, while there very well may be, from time to time, good reasons for meaning only what we know everyone in the culture can understand, there is nothing inherent in public language which requires this.

I return at last to the question with which I started: What role does our community play in determining meaning? Heidegger's answer has little to do with the role of a public language in determining the meaning of utterances made in that language. Instead, our community affects meaning indirectly by structuring the kinds of activities in which we can engage. We find ourselves already in a world, Heidegger points out. All our activities, in turn, are implicated in a series of interactions with others in the world. Because it is our familiarity with things as articulated in our activities that determines our meaning, it follows that what we can mean is always shaped (but not determined) by the people and things around us.

## NOTES

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1. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 211.
2. Ibid.
3. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1927), 168. All quotations cited as *Sein und Zeit* are my translations. Quotations cited as *Being and Time* are Macquarrie and Robinson's translations.
4. Ibid., 169.
5. Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time, *Division I* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 229.
6. Taylor Carman, "Must We Be Inauthentic?" in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity*, ed. Mark A. Wrathall and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), 21.
7. Mark Wrathall, "The Conditions of Truth in Heidegger and Davidson," *Monist* 82 (2) (April 1999): 304–23.
8. I will not consider here the other version of externalism, based on the role external objects play in fixing the content of our propositional states. While this externalism is in fact amenable to Heidegger's view of things, it is not relevant to the topic under consideration here—namely, whether it is the social character of language that leads to idle conversation and other inauthentic modes of inhabiting the world.
9. Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning,'" in *The Twin Earth Chronicles: Twenty Years of Reflection on Hilary Putnam's "The Meaning of 'Meaning,'"* ed. Andrew Pessin and Sanford Goldberg (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 3–59, quotation on 13.
10. Ibid., 6.
11. Ibid., 13.
12. See Tyler Burge, "Wherein is Language Social?" in *Reflections on Chomsky*, ed. A. George (New York: Blackwell, 1989), 175–91; "Individualism and the Mental," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 4: *Studies in Metaphysics*, ed. Peter French, Theodore Uehling Jr., Howard Wettstein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 73–121; "Individualism and Psychology," *Philosophical Review* 125 (1986): 3–45.
13. Burge, "Wherein Is Language Social?" 186–87.
14. Burge, "Individualism and the Mental," 77.
15. One could imagine further examples that would distinguish between the ability to determine the extension of a term and the mastery of the inferential relations that accrue to sentences employing that term. But there is a limit to how far these two features of linguistic mastery can be isolated: at some point, if a speaker lacks knowledge of one type, we are inclined to say that he also lacks knowledge of the other.
16. Much of the comments that follow are inspired by Davidson's discussion of Burge's social externalism in "Knowing One's Own Mind," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* (1987): 441–58, and "Epistemology Externalized," *Dialectica* 45 (1991): 191–202.
17. Putnam, "Meaning of 'Meaning,'" 14.
18. Davidson makes this point in "The Social Aspect of Language," in *The Philosophy of Michael Dummett*, ed. Brian McGuinness and Gianluigi Oliveri (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 5.
19. U.K. Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, Driving Standards Agency, *The Highway Code: for pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and drivers*, New expanded ed. (London, 1999), General rules 160 & 161.
20. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 176–77; translation modified.
21. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 349.

22. 1 Peter 3:1–2. KJV.
23. Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Paul Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pt. IV, chap. X, 286.
24. Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kesiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 48. It is important to note here that for Heidegger, *ausdrücklichkeit* is not explicitness in the sense of having a thematic or conscious awareness of a thing. Rather, something is *ausdrücklich* if it is expressed or made manifest by our activities, and thus capable of being made explicit, even if it is not presently explicit.
25. Ibid., 262; translation modified.
26. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 203–4; translation modified, some italics omitted.
27. Ibid., 197.
28. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 297.
29. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 205.
30. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 163.
31. James Siebach tells me that, in many crosswalks in London, the warning "look right" has been painted on the crosswalk, apparently in response to the tendency of visitors to step into the path of traffic coming from the right, having first instinctively looked left (as one ought when cars drive on the right side of the road).
32. Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 269–70; translation modified, italics added.
33. Ibid., 301; translation modified.
34. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 212; translation modified.
35. Ibid., 214; translation modified.
36. "Reply to Taylor Carman," in *Heidegger, Authenticity, Modernity*, ed. Wrathall and Malpas, 307.
37. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 231.



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# The concept of death in *Being and Time*

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> That "... is to say that no one may experience death before actually dying, which strikes me as crass materialism."[1] (Kierkegaard)

The concept of death is one of the least understood but most significant concepts in *Being and Time*.[2] Heidegger's argument at the beginning of Division Two for the need for a continued investigation into the being of Dasein rests on the observation that the existential analytic has to that point taken no notice of Dasein's finitude, its having an end, namely death. It is through an inquiry into the appropriate response to anxiety in the face of death that Heidegger introduces and develops the notions of resoluteness and authenticity. And it is the results of those inquiries that lead him to reconceptualize the being of Dasein in terms of a radically new conception of temporality. Yet Heidegger's discussion of death has not received the attention it must, if we are to take seriously Heidegger's placement of that discussion at the beginning of Division Two, where he sets out not just to explore classically existentialist themes, such as anxiety, death, and guilt, but also to redescribe the being of Dasein in an allegedly more radical way.

In order to understand the concept of death in *Being and Time*, I want to focus on a puzzling feature of Heidegger's discussion of it: death is a way to be Dasein. I shall begin by discussing an apparent contradiction in Heidegger's treatment of death – that death is a condition in which Dasein is unable to be, and that death is a way to be Dasein. I shall show that several attempts to resolve the apparent contradiction will not work, and that we must take seriously the claim that death is a way to be Dasein in which Dasein is unable to be Dasein. Accepting this claim is tantamount to rejecting the common-sensical interpretive notion that death in *Being and Time* is something like the ending of one's life. To resolve the apparent contradiction, I shall distinguish thin and thick senses of Dasein's being, and argue that death is a condition in which Dasein's being is at issue, but

in which Dasein is anxiously unable to understand itself by projecting itself into some possible way to be. Finally, I shall argue that we can understand the condition as what one might call "a limit-situation for Dasein's ability-to-be."

## The apparent contradiction

*Being and Time* presents us with an apparent contradiction in its characterization of death (*Tod*). Heidegger writes, Dasein's "death is the possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there," (*S&Z*, p. 250). Throughout *B&T*'s §50, titled, "A Sketch of the Existential-Ontological Structure of Death," Heidegger characterizes Dasein's death as a possibility. And indeed, it would seem that since a human's demise is always possible, and is moreover, we think, unavoidable at some point, the characterization seems fair. But *Being and Time* is a systematic treatise, and the concept of possibility is treated technically in it. How one should understand Heidegger's apparently reasonable claim that Dasein's death is a possibility, turns of course on how one understands the concept of possibility. And therein lies a difficulty: "a possibility," when applied to Dasein, does not refer to something that could happen to Dasein, but rather to a possible way to be Dasein. (I shall justify this claim below.) Thus, if Heidegger is using his technical language strictly, the characterization of death above turns out to generate an apparent contradiction:

(a) Death is a possibility for Dasein.
(b) Dasein's possibilities are possible ways to be Dasein.
(c) So, death is a possible way to be Dasein!

The difficulty here is not just that it sounds odd, outrageous, or scandalous to say that death is a possible way to be Dasein. For Heidegger's specific characterization of the relevant possibility is that it is one according to which Dasein is no longer able to be. Thus finally,

(d) Death is a possible way to be Dasin, one in which Dasein is not able to be!

And this appears contradictory.





### *"Possibility" in a non-technical sense? An unsuccessful strategy for coping with the apparent contradiction*

How are we to cope with this apparent contradiction? Probably the most natural tack is to suggest that in writing that death is the possibility of Dasein's no longer being able to be, Heidegger meant the word "possibility" in a more ordinary way, i.e., as something that could happen.[3] Thus, in the characterization of death, Heidegger is not using "possibility" in the way I formulate in (b) above. This makes short work of the apparent contradiction.

But unfortunately, this simple strategy is not available to us. Heidegger writes, "Death is a way to be, which Dasein takes over, as soon as it is," (*S&Z*, p. 245). And for good measure, the first sentence of the very paragraph from which the characterization of death above is taken, is this: "Death is a possibility of being [*Seinsmöglichkeit*], which Dasein in each case itself has to take over," (*S&Z*, p. 250). So, Heidegger here directly endorses claim (c) from the apparent contradiction above, and thus also provides indirect confirmation that both (a) and (b) are views of his as well.

To underscore the unavoidability of confronting (c) head on, let us briefly examine Heidegger's use of the term "possibility." In an important passage in Division One of *Being and Time*, he writes,

> Possibility, which Dasein in each case is existentially, is distinguished just as much from empty, logical possibility as from the contingency of something occurrent, in so far as with the latter this and that can "happen" ["*passieren*"]. As a modal category of being-occurrent, possibility means the *not yet* actual and the *not ever* necessary. It characterizes the *merely* [*nur*] possible. ... Possibility as an *existentiale*, on the other hand, is the most originary and last, positive, ontological determination of Dasein.... (*S&Z*, pp. 143–144)

The strategy under consideration for avoiding the apparent contradiction relies on a sense of "possibility" that is here directly excluded from application to Dasein. According to this strategy, what is it to say of death that it is "possible" with respect to Dasein? It is to say that death is something that can befall Dasein. This sounds a lot like Heidegger's characterization of possibility with respect to the occurrent: "with the latter this and that can 'happen'." The occurrent (*das Vorhandene*) is a sort of entity unlike Dasein. The term has a broad sense in which it refers to anything unlike Dasein, anything that does not have Dasein's definatory features as laid out in Chapters 1 and 2 of Division One.[4] (Heidegger often flags this broad sense by using the phrase "in the broadest sense," as for example at *S&Z*, p. 45.) The term also has a narrow sense, which is by far the most frequent in *Being and Time*, in which it picks out entities unlike Dasein that are

independent of Dasein. In this sense it contrasts with the term "the available" (*das Zuhandene*), which refers to entities unlike Dasein that are what they are in virtue of being involved in Dasein's projects and practices, the paraphernalia of the human world.

Now, one might try to accommodate the claim that death is not a possibility in the sense excluded at *S&Z*, pp. 143–144 by pointing out that Heidegger labels the excluded sense "the merely possible." Thus, perhaps the point is this. Death is not *merely* possible, for after all, it is in some sense *unavoidable*. In fact, in §52, Heidegger indicates that death is "certain," not just merely possible. But this tactic will not work either. Although this sense of a "stronger possibility" might ease the apparent contradiction in Heidegger's characterization of death as a possibility, it would make nonsense of much of what Heidegger is trying to do with possibility in §31, where the passage occurs. Dasein's characteristics are, according to Heidegger, possible ways to be:

> The characteristics that can be exhibited by [Dasein] are thus not occurrent "properties" of an occurrent entity that "looks" such and so, but rather possible ways for [Dasein] in each case to be and only that. (*S&Z*, p. 42).

Heidegger spells this out one step further, when he writes on the next page, "Dasein determines itself as an entity in each case in terms of a possibility, which it *is*, i.e., at the same time somehow understands," (*S&Z*, p. 43). Whenever we ask the question, Who is this Dasein?, we must answer in terms of the possible ways to be Dasein in terms of which this Dasein understands itself. He writes, "Existing being-in-the-world [i.e., Dasein] is disclosed as such in the for-the-sake-of-which, and this disclosedness is called understanding," (*S&Z*, p. 143). Dasein's possible ways to be are "for-the-sakes-of-which." To be brief with a complex issue, Heidegger claims that whenever I use some bit of paraphernalia, say a chair, I do so in order to accomplish some task, an "in-order-to-which." I sit in the chair in order to type at the computer, for example. And this interaction with paraphernalia (typing at the computer) is in order to accomplish yet another task, namely writing a book. This task as well ties into further tasks. At some point, Heidegger claims, this chain of tasks comes to rest in some possible way to be Dasein. "The primary 'in-order-to-which' is a for-the-sake-of-which. The 'for-the-sake-of', however, always concerns the being of *Dasein*...," (*S&Z*, p. 84). In tracing back the trail of in-orders-to-which one eventually arrives at the possible way to be Dasein for the sake of which I sit in the chair and type, say, being an educator.

For-the-sakes-of-which are possibilities of being for Dasein. "Dasein understands itself always already and always still, as long as it is, in terms





of possibilities," (*S&Z*, p. 145). The characterization of "possibility" in §31 is intended to distinguish the way in which for-the-sakes-of-which are possibilities with respect to Dasein from the way in which the contingencies of the occurrent are possible with respect to them. And here then is the difficulty with the most recent attempt to avoid the apparent contradiction in Heidegger's characterization of death: for-the-sakes-of-which are not possible in the stronger sense that we have been considering as potentially applicable to death. Death may be either necessary or certain, but surely being an educator is neither. Yet the primary bearers of the term "possible," in whatever sense Heidegger is advocating its application to Dasein, are Dasein's for-the-sakes-of-which. Death, if it is a possibility, is possible in the same sense in which being an educator is possible. And now we have arrived back at our apparent contradiction.

### *Death vs. Demise: Two more strategies for avoiding the apparent contradiction*

We have seen that death in Heidegger's sense is not some event that might (or certainly or necessarily will) occur at the end of Dasein's life. He calls that event "demise" (*Ableben*). Perhaps if we examine what Heidegger has to say about the relation between death and demise, we can discover a way to avoid the apparent contradiction. After presenting the concept of demise in *Being and Time*, I shall consider two further strategies for avoiding the apparent contradiction. The first strategy suggests that death is Dasein's prospective confrontation with demise. The second strategy develops the idea that death is authentic demise. Neither of these strategies can succeed, I shall argue, and so we shall still be left with the job of sorting out the apparent contradiction.

#### *Demise*

Heidegger introduces the term "demise" in §49, titled "The demarcation of the Existential Analysis of Death in Contrast with Other Possible Interpretations of the Phenomenon." He works his way to "demise" by way of the term "perishing" (*Verenden*). Perishing is the ending of a life: "We call the ending of what lives '*perishing*,'" (*S&Z*, p. 247). Perishing is a biological concept of the ending of the life of some living organism. Heidegger does not, and we need not here, develop this concept in any detail. Suffice it to say that perishing is something like the cessation of life-maintaining, organic functions. Surely humans undergo such perishing.

But humans are not merely living, and when a human life ends, much more takes place than simply a "cessation of life-maintaining functions."

When we describe the life of some Dasein, we can do so always in terms of the development, success, failure, or unfinished pursuit of projects and goals. Such descriptions of human lives are possible in virtue of the distinctive way of being that Dasein has, namely, that it determines and understands itself by throwing itself into for-the-sakes-of-which. Hence, the ending of a human life is not mere perishing; it is what Heidegger calls "demise:"

> Even if Dasein's physiological death is not ontically isolated, but rather co-determined by its originary sort of being, and even if Dasein can also end without authentically dying, and even if *qua* Dasein it does not simply perish, nonetheless since Dasein "has" its physiological death, of the sort had by what lives, we indicate this intermediate phenomenon by "*demise*." (*S&Z*, p. 247)

The point of the passage is twofold: (1) to grant that Dasein has a physiological death, that it in some sense perishes; and (2) to indicate that Dasein's perishing is "co-determined by [Dasein's] originary sort of being," i.e., that it is distinctive in virtue of the distinctiveness of its way of being. The intermediate phenomenon – demise – is thus the perishing in so far as it is modified by Dasein's distinctive way of being. Dasein's demise is the end of its pursuit of tasks, goals, and projects, an ending that is forced by organic perishing. Demise is thus the possible and certain event that brings Dasein's living to a close.

*The First Strategy: Death is Dasein's understanding of its demise*

Some have suggested that death is Dasein's interpretation of or encounter with demise.[5] This suggestion fits well with the line of thought that for Heidegger what is distinctively Daseinish about Dasein is not the facts (*Tatsachen*) of its biology, but rather the Facts (*Fakta*) of its interpretation thereof: biological sex does not belong to Dasein *qua* Dasein, but rather interpretive gender does. It appears to be supported also by Heidegger's claim that "*Death*, as the end of *Dasein*, *is* in this entity's being towards its end," (*S&Z*, p. 259). The term "being-towards" in *Being and Time* refers to a sort of intentionality: Dasein is towards $x$ when Dasein takes account of $x$, understands $x$, interprets $x$, lets $x$ matter to it, or encounters $x$. So, Dasein has its death only in so far as it is "towards," or intentionally directed to its end.

This strategy is also unsuccessful. Death is only in Dasein's being towards *its end*, which is *not* demise, but rather *death* itself.[6] Thus, death is only in Dasein's being towards death. What could that mean, however? It is a consequence of the identification of death as a way to be Dasein. Possibilities are possibilities for Dasein only in so far as Dasein projects them as options for self-understanding: "... projection ... throws the possibility





ahead of itself as possibility and as such lets it *be*," (*S&Z*, p. 145).

Heidegger introduces a technical term to pick out this being towards death: dying (*Sterben*).

> *Dying*, however, serves as a title for the way of being in which Dasein *is towards* its death. Thus, we must say: Dasein never perishes. But Dasein can only demise so long as it is dying. (*S&Z*, p. 247)

The argument that follows only makes sense if we hold fast to an ontological distinction between death and demise. Heidegger continues, recall, "Thus, we must say: Dasein never perishes. But Dasein can only demise so long as it is dying," (*S&Z*, p. 247). Death is a distinctive feature of Dasein *qua* entity that is existent in the technical sense. Furthermore, death, as a possible way to be Dasein, is only in so far as it is understood by Dasein. This understanding of death is called "dying." Demise, on the other hand, is the intermediate phenomenon of the distinctive sort of perishing that takes place when Dasein's life ceases. Demise thus requires that the demising entity have Dasein's originary sort of being, i.e., that it be towards its death, that it die.

*The Second Strategy: Death is the authentic, demise the inauthentic end of Dasein's life*

But there is another way to try to exploit Heidegger's introduction of the terms "demise" and "death" in order to dodge the apparent contradiction. Heidegger associates "demise" and "death" with inauthenticity and authenticity respectively. And so here the idea emerges that perhaps demise and death are both ways of having one's life come to an end, one inauthentic, the other authentic. On this interpretation, death would still be the ending of a human life, but now conceived as understood or perhaps confronted or undergone by authentic Dasein; demise would be such an ending as understood or confronted or undergone by inauthentic Dasein. But this interpretation oversimplifies the text. Heidegger in fact seems to say not that demise is inauthentic death, but rather that when Dasein inauthentically understands (i.e., disowns) its death, it focuses on demise instead. Inauthentic Dasein misunderstands death as being demise, hence does not come face to face with death, and thereby evades anxiety about death.

Although saying just what authenticity and inauthenticity are is in itself a substantial interpretive enterprise, it is necessary to say something about them here, so that we can understand the suggestion that is now under consideration. Heidegger offers a preliminary characterization of authenticity and inauthenticity in §9 of *Being and Time*: he contrasts Dasein "'choosing,' winning, itself" with it "losing itself, or better, never winning itself but only seeming to," (*S&Z*, p. 42). In §40, on anxiety, Heidegger

describes Dasein's tendency to bury itself in the public, common ways of understanding things as "Dasein's flight *from itself* and its authenticity," (*S&Z*, p. 184). In §§35–38 in Chapter 5 of Division One, Heidegger identifies the various modes of such flight: idle talk, perhaps talk for which one takes no responsibility (§35); curiosity, the constant search after something new, e.g., Tabloid journalism (§36); and ambiguity (§37). All of these in turn generate a kind of tranquilization, alienation, and turbulence (§38). These modes of flight distract Dasein from any genuine understanding of what sort of entity it is. Only through resoluteness – silently throwing oneself into the possibility of death, and being prepared for the attendant anxiety (*S&Z*, pp. 296–297) – does one come face to face with what sort of entity one is, and hold on to that understanding. In inauthenticity one disowns one's sort of being; in authenticity one faces up to one's sort of being and owns it.

With this general characterization of authenticity and inauthenticity, let us look a little more closely at the details of Heidegger's treatment of death and demise in §52 of *Being and Time*, so that we can see whether the suggestion that death and demise are authentic and inauthentic varieties of the same thing is workable. Heidegger writes, "The publicness of everyday with-one-another 'knows' death as a constantly occurring encounter, as a 'case of death' [»*Todesfall*«]. This or that neighbor or stranger 'dies,'" (*S&Z*, pp. 252–253).[7] The anonymous, public, inauthentic way of interpreting things interprets death as a sort of event that is constantly occurring around us. "...Dasein hides this fact [of its death] from itself by transforming death into an everyday occurring case of death amongst others, which certainly assures us even more clearly that 'one oneself' definitely still 'lives,'" (*S&Z*, p. 254). So, perhaps Dasein covers up its own mortality by focusing on the demise of others around it. It then reassures itself by noting that only others have demised, not it itself.[8]

But I do not think that this is the right way to read what Heidegger is up to in the paragraphs. The point of these passages is not that everyday Dasein hides the fact that *it* will die by interpreting death as something that strikes *others*, but rather that by interpreting death as demise (the mundane event with which we are already familiar), Dasein needs to face up only to its demise, not to its death.

> *The one does not let courage towards anxiety in the face of death emerge.* The domination of the public interpretedness of the one has always already decided about the affectivity [*Befindlichkeit*] in terms of which the attitude towards death should be determined. In anxiety in the face of death Dasein is brought before itself as delivered over to [death]. The one seeks to turn this anxiety into a fear in the face of a coming event [viz., demise]. (*S&Z*, p. 254)





To see the point I want to make, one must attend carefully to Heidegger's specific language here: the one does not try to transform anxiety in the face of *my* death into a relief that it is not I who have died. Rather, the one transfigures anxiety in the face of death into a fear in the face of demise, a *coming* event. It is my demise that is still a coming event, and it is to this coming event that inauthenticity has me attend.

So, the relation between death and demise is not that demise is death misinterpreted as something that does not strike me, but only others. Rather, death and demise just are not the same thing. The public, inauthentic way of interpreting things, however, seizes on demise as a substitute for death. It seeks to effect this substitution, because fear in the face of demise is something that the public can deal with by tranquilization, whereas anxiety in the face of death is not.

Therefore, the details of what Heidegger says by way of introducing, distinguishing, and relating his terms "death" and "demise" do not alleviate the apparent contradiction from which we departed. Instead, they reinforce it. Death is not the ending of a human life, whether authentically confronted or inauthentically, nor is it one's understanding of such an ending. Death is something else. But what? Well, Heidegger has already said: a way to be Dasein. Let us now explore what he could mean by that.

## Death as a way to be Dasein

Let us then accept that Heidegger means to claim that death is a possible way to be Dasein. If he means this, it now becomes clear, he cannot be using "death" in its ordinary signification. Death cannot be the state of having passed away, for that state is not a possible way to be Dasein, but rather a way *not* to be *at all*. But now we have to confront the apparent contradiction. Need we accept it as such? That is, need we accept that Heidegger has talked himself into a corner? Recall the apparent contradiction, as encapsulated in (d) from above:

(d) Death is a possible way to be Dasein, one in which Dasein is not able to be!

Endorsing (d) would seem to be hopeless. Mary is able to run. Now, consider the condition of not being able to run, into which Mary can fall, say through paralysis. This condition – the inability to run – is a possible way for Mary to be, though clearly *not* a possible way for Mary to run. What seems hopeless about (d) is that it appears to demand a possible way to be, in which Mary is not able to be. And that is impossible!

This impossibility thus forces us to examine the suggestion that perhaps there is a condition of being in which Dasein *is*, in one sense, but is not able *to be*, in another sense. That is, we can try to disambiguate two things that Heidegger might have in mind by Dasein's being, and thus avoid the contradiction. What we need is a thin and a thick sense of Dasein's being, so that there can be a condition of being in the thin sense, in which Dasein is not able to be in the thick sense. And what might those thin and thick senses be?[9]

*Existence and understanding*

In Chapter 1 of Division One of *Being and Time* Heidegger introduces the technical concept of "existence," as he calls it. He states that "the 'essence' of [Dasein] lies in its to-be," (*S&Z*, p. 42). The "essence" of Dasein lies in its be-ing, its going about the business of being in the way that it does. The term "essence" always occurs in scare-quotes, because Dasein actually has no essence in the normal sense. The essence of a thing is what a thing must be. In Dasein's case, Heidegger argues, who[10] Dasein is cannot be answered except by examining how Dasein is, what it is up to. There is no answer to the question, Who is Dasein?, except by way of examining who Dasein, as a matter of fact, is going about being. Heidegger puts the point in other words by writing that Dasein's being is "at issue" in its being. Who Dasein is is not settled by some essence that defines it, but rather is an issue Dasein must confront and address in existing. We can say that who Dasein is is questionable, in the sense that it is always in question.[11]

Can the question be answered? This query is ambiguous, however, between these two further queries: (a) Can the question be settled by a definitive answer?; and (b) Can one answer the question, even if in only a provisional fashion? The proper response to the first query, (a), is that no, the question cannot be definitively settled, for then Dasein's being would no longer be at issue. But the proper response to the second query, (b), is that yes, Dasein can provisionally answer the question. This provisional answering of the question Heidegger calls "understanding." And so he writes, in Chapter 2 of Division One, "Dasein is the entity that in its being comports [relates] itself understandingly to this being," (*S&Z*, pp. 52–53). Let us explore understanding.

The phenomenon that Heidegger calls "understanding" is intimately linked with the concept of Dasein's "ability-to-be."

> The sort of being of Dasein as ability-to-be lies existentially in understanding. Dasein is not something occurrent, which possesses as a supplement, the ability to do something [*etwas zu können*], but rather it is primarily being-possible. Dasein is in each case what it can be and how it is its possibility. (*S&Z*, p. 143)





The idea seems to be this. What is it for Dasein to understand itself? It is for it to "project itself upon its for-the-sake-of-which," that is, "Dasein understands itself ... in terms of possibilities," (*S&Z*, p. 145). In other words, Dasein understands itself by throwing itself into possible ways to be Dasein – being a teacher, being a student, being a mother or father, etc. – for the sake of which it undertakes the subsidiary tasks it does – writing a lecture, going to a soccer game, etc. – and wields the paraphernalia it does – pens and paper, cars, soccer balls, etc. To understand itself as being a teacher is precisely to pursue these tasks and wield this paraphernalia for the sake of being a teacher.

In Heidegger's presentation of understanding there emerges the crucial concept of *ability*. And here we begin to get a clue about death, for after all, in death Dasein is not able to be, Heidegger has obscurely declared. Heidegger writes, in a short and largely italicized paragraph: "*Understanding is the existential being of Dasein's own ability-to-be.*" (*S&Z*, p. 144). To be able-to-be something is to understand oneself as something. There are two significant points that emerge in this characterization of understanding by way of the concept of ability. First, Dasein's self-understanding (and hence its for-the-sake-of-which) is not to be understood as a self-concept in any normal sense, as a theory of oneself or a plan for one's future. "Projection [i.e., understanding] has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a thought out plan, in accordance with which Dasein establishes its being," (*S&Z*, p. 145). My being a teacher is not so much something that I plan, think through, and act on, but rather much more like my ability to drive, something developed through a combination of imitation, rote learning, supervision and censuring by others, and so on.[12]

Second, and this is the point that is really relevant here, Dasein's ability-to-be a teacher is made possible by an affective disposition to be a teacher. The ability is not some property that I possess, nor is it some abstract, purely intellectual or purely physical capacity of mine. Rather, it is what Heidegger calls a "thrown possibility," that is, an engaged ability that requires a certain affective disclosure of myself and the world to make sense for me. I could not be a teacher, in the sense that I could not throw myself into the subsidiary tasks and wield the requisite paraphernalia, if I did not encounter the possibility (however tacitly) as noble, or desirable, or whatever. The possibility of being a teacher must matter to me in some way, must be significant in some way. The significance of the for-the-sake-of-which of being a teacher in turn lends a derivative significance to the subsidiary tasks and paraphernalia. This affective disclosure, which Heideg-

ger calls "affectivity," reveals to me the for-the-sake-of-which as bearing some "import," to borrow a term from Charles Taylor.[13] Heidegger:

> Possibility as an *existentiale* does not mean the free-floating ability-to-be in the sense of the "indifference of the will" (*libertas indifferentiae*). Dasein, as essentially affective, is in each case already caught up in determinate possibilities. (*S&Z*, p. 144)

Part of what is involved in being able to be a teacher is something affective: Dasein has the motivational or dispositional ground for being that. A condition in which one does not care about the possibility in question cuts the ground out from under one's ability-to-be it.

*Anxiety*

Now, this insight suggests a certain unsettling possibility for Dasein, namely, that it should find itself unable-to-be anything, because nothing matters to it in any way. This condition of nothing mattering to Dasein is what Heidegger calls "anxiety." His phenomenology of anxiety in §40 is extremely complicated. Let me describe just enough of what Heidegger means by "anxiety" that we can see how it relates to death and helps us disambiguate the thin and thick senses of Dasein's being.

By "anxiety" Heidegger means to pick out a global discomfort with the world. The sort of attunement (*Stimmung*), or way of being attuned to things, that Heidegger has in mind is not a discomfort with some particular object or contingency. (Heidegger contrasts anxiety with fear, in which one fears some particlar fearsome thing (*S&Z*, p. 186).) It is not the sort of thing one suffers before a job interview. Rather, it reveals the whole (human) world in a definite way.

> ... *the-in-the-face-of-which of anxiety is the world as such.* The total insignificance which announces itself in [anxiety] does not mean the absence of the world, but rather means that intraworldly [*innerweltlich*] entities are in themselves so totally unimportant, that on the basis of this *insignificance* of the intraworldly, the world in its worldhood is still uniquely obtrusive. (*S&Z*, p. 187)

Although directed to nothing in particular, this anxiety is so real that one feels cramped, confined, stifled, and if acute enough, one loses one's breath (*S&Z*, p. 186).

Anxiety reveals everything within the world (the intraworldly) as insignificant. What does Heidegger have in mind here? To answer this, I must very briefly say something about the world and about significance.





"What stifles [us] is not this or that, but also not everything occurrent together as a sum, but rather the *possibility* of the available in general, that is, the world itself," (*S&Z*, p. 187). The world, for Heidegger, is not a thing, a "this or that," nor is it the whole pile of things that we find in our environment. It is, rather, the entire social milieu that makes things possible by comprising the essential structures in terms of which they make sense. For the available, i.e., equipment or paraphernalia, the structures that make them possible are the uses that we make of them. Briefcases are for carrying papers and books around, and this use of the briefcase is what makes the briefcase a briefcase, rather than a mere piece of leather. The world involves the set of structures that give pieces of equipment and paraphernalia their roles.

But the world has another dimension, indeed a dimension without which it could never give pieces of equipment their roles: it is that domain wherein Dasein determines itself. It comprises also the set of possibilities for human action, and thus for human beings determining who they are. Heidegger says that the totality of all these structures is *significance*. An entity in turn is significant if it is connected in with this structure; to be assigned by the structure to a role or human possibility is to be significant (*S&Z*, p. 87). It is crucial that this term is introduced only *after* Heidegger has argued that the world is at once that "in terms of which" Dasein encounters paraphernalia *and* that "wherein" Dasein understands itself by throwing itself into its own possibilities. It takes both links for there to be significance, and hence for intraworldly things to be significant.

So, for everything within the world to be insignificant, this relational whole must somehow be torn apart. But how? Do chairs cease being assigned to their roles? How could they be chairs of they were severed from their roles? The ground level connection between pieces of equipment and their roles cannot be severed. Perhaps the roles that pieces of equipment play are severed from human possibilities? In this case, a chair would still be used for sitting on, but this would have nothing to do with eating dinner (or anything else of the sort). This could not be the answer either. The only link left in the chain of significance is Dasein's *self*-assignment to possibilities. This link must be broken. Everything within the world becomes insignificant in that it no longer helps me determine myself. It no longer shows up for me as having anything to do with me.

So, anxiety reveals the world, the entire matrix of relations that normally connects my self-understanding with chairs and hammers and also human possibilities, as unconnected to me, that is, as insignificant. The world is still palpably there, so much so that it remains the context in which everything and everyone makes sense. (Recall, Heidegger writes, "... the world in its worldhood is still uniquely obtrusive...", (*S&Z*, p. 187).) But it does

not relate to me and my self-understanding. *I* cease to make sense, for I am cut off from the context that lets things make sense. The briefcase still makes some kind of sense: it is what one uses for carrying papers and books around. But I don't make sense: I am not assigned to any way to be a human being. Thus, that in the face of which I am anxious is global, because it is the framework of all things and human activity. It is, in short, being-in-the-world. "If accordingly nothing, that is the world as such, turns out to be the in-the-face-of-which of anxiety, then this means: *that in the face of which anxiety is anxious is being-in-the-world itself,*" (*S&Z*, p. 187).

Everything within the world becomes insignificant, because nothing matters to Dasein. Anxiety is the condition in which nothing matters. It is important to bear in mind, however, that although nothing matters to me, because I cannot understand who I am, the issue or question, Who am I?, remains. The question persists, but I am indifferent to its answers; the answers seem irrelevant to me. Indifference characterizes my option between two movies I could see tonight. If the question were no longer there, then I would be "neither indifferent nor not indifferent" (*S&Z*, p. 42) to its answers. With respect to the (for me non-) option between two ways to be an avant-garde Russian painter, I am neither indifferent nor not. Being neither indifferent nor not is the language that Heidegger uses to describe the occurrent. Dasein must be, at a minimum, indifferent, because it is defined by existence, its being being at issue. Indifference is a way to be disposed with respect to a possibility one confronts. Global indifference to my possibilities is anxiety.

### *Thin and thick senses of Dasein's being*

"Anxiety," then, describes the affective condition of Dasein when nothing matters to it, when everything is equally irrelevant. How should we describe Dasein's self-understanding in such a condition? We have seen that to be able-to-be someone in particular involves being affectively disposed one way or the other with respect to certain possible ways to be Dasein. So, in such a condition, Dasein would not be able to be anyone. It would be unable-to-be-Dasein. Or at least one could put the point that way. In such a condition, the thin concept of Dasein's being – viz., its being being at issue for it, there being a question, Who am I? – swings free of the thicker concept of Dasein's being – viz., being able-to-be someone by throwing oneself into some definite possibility. Dasein is, but is unable-to-be. And this matches Heidegger's characterization of "death." This is a sort of existential death, if one may put the point this way. It is not the ending of some occurrent process, nor is it the dissolution of some organism. Rather,





it is the inability to project oneself forth into some way to be Dasein.

This thus resolves the apparent contradiction. We must understand that Dasein is in a thin sense – its being is at issue for it – and is primarily and usually also in a thick sense – it understands who it is by throwing itself into possible ways to be. By disambiguating these senses, and carefully reading Heidegger's characterization of death (as the inability-to-be-there) in terms of these two senses, we can see that Heidegger does not contradict himself. We can also understand why death and anxiety are tied to one another, why one confronts death in anxiety. Finally, this lends some substance to the idea that this condition of anxious confrontation with death is the sort of thing one might want to avoid, and thus that the public, inauthentic way of interpreting things might seek to evade this condition by distracting one with a near relative, namely, demise. But are death and demise near relatives? Heidegger says they are, because both can be seen (one rightly, the other wrongly) as the *end of Dasein.*

## Ends and limit-situations

Indeed, one of the most pressing objections to the interpretation I have offered is that in Chapter 1 of Division Two Heidegger repeatedly describes death as "the end of Dasein." What could possibly be the end of Dasein, if not the ending of Dasein's life, which I have insisted is demise and not death? A careful examination of what Heidegger actually says about ends and Dasein reveals, however, that the ending of one's life cannot be a candidate for the end of Dasein. I want to suggest that we must, instead, interpret the notion of the end of Dasein through the concept of a limit-situation, a concept that Heidegger learns from Jaspers and to which he refers in a crucial passage in Chapter 1 of Division Two.

### *The end of Dasein is not a stopping*

Is is important to bear in mind the structure of Chapter 1 of Division Two of *Being and Time*, on death. After putting to one side Dasein's encounter with the passing away of others, Heidegger turns to the question, What is the end of Dasein itself? §48, titled "What is still outstanding, end, totality" (*"Ausstand, Ende, Ganzheit"*), tackles the concept of the end of Dasein head on. To understand what Heidegger is up to in §48 and the sections that follow it, it is crucial to see that §48 has a negative result: it argues only that certain conceptions of the end of Dasein are misguided, because they are not ontologically appropriate to Dasein.[14] At the end of §48 he writes,

> *Death as the end of Dasein cannot be appropriately characterized through any of these modes of ending.* If death were understood as being-at-its-end in the sense of an ending of the sort we have reviewed, then Dasein would thereby be posited as something occurrent or available. (*S&Z*, p. 245)

And the last paragraph of the section is this:

> The positive, existential-analytical Interpretation of death and its character of being the end [*und seines Endcharakters*] is to be carried out in light of the guide, which we won earlier, provided by the fundamental constitution of Dasein, the phenomenon of care. (*S&Z*, p. 246)

So, §48 dispenses with several conceptions of the end of Dasein, those that are based on a conception of death as "being-at-its-end," as a sort of ending. What sense(s) of ending is it that Heidegger rejects?

All of the senses have in common that they are modes of what Heidegger calls "stopping" (*Aufhören*). On pp. 244–245 Heidegger offers a list of various modes of stopping, including these:[15]

(A) *Disappearing*: the rain stops; the bread is gone. Here either a process ceases, i.e., no longer occurs, or something that was available is gone, no longer available because consumed or destroyed. (Spelled out further into *S&Z*, p. 245.)

(B) *Breaking off*: the road stops, in the way in which the former Richard M. Nixon freeway in southern California for many years – after Watergate, of course – hung in mid-air, incomplete, as a ramp to nowhere, because California just stopped building it. This is more than a mere disappearing, because the stopping is *premature*. In this case, something stops before an intended goal or end-point is reached. (Breaking off "determines an *incomplete* occurrent entity," (*S&Z*, p. 245).)

(C) *Completing*: the road stops, in the way in which Interstate 10 is complete with its ending by the shores of the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica, thereby achieving its goal of linking the Atlantic with the Pacific by a southern route. Here something stops with the reaching of an intended goal or endpoint. (In Heidegger's language, this is "precisely to be, with its end, for the first time occurrent," as what it is.)

(D) *Fulfilling itself*: the fruit fulfills itself with its ripeness. This is a "founded mode of 'completeness'" (*S&Z*, p. 245), as Heidegger says, for here the fruit is complete and the intended goal is internal to the fruit and determinative of what that fruit is. (The perishing of an unripe piece of fruit would then be a "founded mode of breaking off.")

Heidegger lets all these variants fall under the term "being-at-its-end."

What is the basic concept of stopping that underlies all these more





specific concepts? It is the concept of the stopping of a process.[16] The raining is a process that begins at four o'clock and ends at five o'clock. Building the (subsequently incomplete) freeway begins in 1970 and breaks off in 1974. The ripening of the fruit begins in May and fulfills itself in September. Whether the stopping is a disappearing, like the rain, or a completion like the building of Interstate 10, or a fulfillment, like the ripening of a fruit, the stopping in question is parasitic upon the ontology of the occurrent or available. Processes (and things) are occurrent or available; they can stop. Dasein, however, is neither process nor thing and cannot stop, not because it goes on forever, but rather because it is not a process to begin with. Dasein's being is characterized in terms of existence (its being being at issue for it) and understanding (the ability-to-be some possible way to be Dasein). Heidegger claims that these are not processes.

This claim is open to an immediate objection, however. "Surely Dasein is a process of living, and surely this process comes to an end! Of course, the living is not merely biological, like the living of a bird, but is rather a living of a human life. Nonetheless, this living must come to an end. Dasein must at some point be at its end, or else one is asserting Dasein's immortality!" Heidegger agrees with the objection, except the first sentence. Recall the intermediate phenomenon of demise: the ending of a life, when that life has a distinctive character in virtue of being modified by Dasein's originary way of being. That originary way of being, we now know, is for Dasein's being to be in question for it (unlike the being of a cat, the general patterns of life of which are "hard-wired" into its biology) and for it to make a provisional answer to that question by understanding itself in terms of some possible way to be itself. The intermediate phenomenon of a human life must come to an end. Heidegger is not asserting immortality. However, what he is primarily interested in is not the being-at-its-end of human life, but a sense of end that is tied exclusively to the conceptual framework of Dasein's originary way of being, to existence and understanding. Human life stops; neither existence nor understanding can be said to stop as such, however.

But is not understanding a process, a process precisely of (provisionally) making oneself who one is by throwing oneself into some possible way to be Dasein, say, being a friend? Might one not refer to this process of understanding as a sort of *becoming*? Heidegger does write in §48 that "Dasein must, as itself, *become*, that is, *be*, what it is not yet," (*S&Z*, p. 243). This line is virtually a reprieve of a passage from §31 on understanding:

> And only because the being of the there maintains its Constitution through understanding and its projective character, because it *is*, what it becomes, or also does not become, can it in understanding say to itself:

"become what you are!" (*S&Z*, p. 145)

It is important to see just what Heidegger is asserting here. Note that the reprieve lines in §48 occur crucially not *in propria persona*, but rather in the midst of Heidegger's attempt, ultimately unsuccessful, to conceive death as a sort of stopping, to work out an analogy between Dasein and a piece of fruit, a sort of life. The analogy and its implications are rejected by the end of §48, as the discussion above has shown. Does that entail that Heidegger does not mean what he says in §31? No. He means *exactly* what he says: one can say to oneself "become what you are!" only because one understands oneself. On the one hand, becoming what you are is what he calls "an intermediate phenomenon," a phenomenon of life that is distinctively modified by Dasein's originary way of being. Its ending is demise. On the other hand, originary understanding is, as Heidegger has said, an ability, not a process. It does not stop as such. Once Heidegger has made this distinction, by the end of §48, he is then in a position to introduce the distinction between demise, which is the stopping of Dasein's life, and death, which is the end of Dasein in some other sense.

### *The end as a limit-situation*

So, in what sense does Dasein have an end? Heidegger does say that death is the end of Dasein, and so we must come to some understanding of how he wants to use "end" in this context. Understanding is not a process; rather, it is an *ability*. In what sense could an ability be said to have an end? Abilities are not like tasks or projects, which do break off or complete themselves with their ending.[17] In the discussion of death Heidegger tips us off as to the direction he is heading by indicating, in a footnote, a debt to Jaspers's concept of a "limit-situation." He writes,

> For the following investigation, one should see *especially*: K. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*[18]. ... Jaspers conceives death by means of the clue of the phenomenon, set forth by him, of 'limit-situations,' whose fundamental significance ranges beyond all typologies of 'attitudes' and 'world-views'. (*S&Z*, p. 249 n.)

There are several points of contact between Heidegger's discussion of death in *Being and Time* and Jaspers's in *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*.[19] Let me summarize some aspects of that connection in three theses. First, Heidegger takes over from Jaspers the idea that one can define and delimit the concept of human existence by describing its limits. Second, limit-situations are situations or conditions of human existence in which one confronts a limitation of human existence. Finally, although Jaspers and





Heidegger have very different ways of thinking about this, each understands the relevant existential limits to arise from structural tensions within human existence.

If we allow Heidegger's reference to limit-siutations to guide us from the concept of ending *qua* stopping to that of limitation, we can make progress in coming to terms with Heidegger's line of thought. Dasein is an ability-to-be, and if we examine the ways in which an ability can be said to have limits, I think we can see how Heidegger understands existential death to be a sort of end. Abilities can be limited in (at least) two sorts of ways. First, abilities have limits on what they can accomplish. My ability to run has its limit at 10 mph, or whatever. My ability to read meets its match with complex, modernist poetry, or Gothic script. Second, abilities (often) have situations in which they are stifled,[20] prevented from being exercised. My ability to breathe is stifled by a lack of oxygen, my ability to see by an absence of light. It is the second of these ways of having limits that interests me here. In the abscence of light, the ability to see is not non-existent; it is simply stifled. Suppose we call situations in which an ability cannot be manifested because stifled a "limit-situation" for that ability, so that utter darkness is a limit-situation for sight. Limit-situations (*Grenzsituationen*) help to define an ability, by revealing its limits (*Grenzen*), limits which function as the boundaries of the ability, its ends, in a recognizable sense of that term. The finitude of an ability (its "endliness," *Endlichkeit*) is spelled out by its limits.

Death is the limit-situation that defines the limits of Dasein's ability-to-be. Dasein's being, in the thick sense, is an ability-to-be. The end or limit of this ability is the inability-to-be. The condition Heidegger calls "death" is a limit-situation for that ability-to-be, one in which one confronts this limitation. Moreover, this limitation arises out of a tension in the very structure of human existence: one's being is always at issue for one, yet there is a condition in which one cannot respond to that issue. Death is the condition in which Dasein is unable to be-there, because it is unable to exercise its ability to determine who it is. This is to say that death is a limit-situation in which the ability-to-be is stifled, in the way in which the ability to see is stifled by the absence of light. This situation occurs when Dasein is beset by anxiety, in which none of its possibilities matters to it differentially, in which all are equally irrelevant to it.

### Conclusion

The term "death" in *Being and Time* does not refer to an event that takes place at the end of every human being's life. Rather, it is the name for a

certain condition in which Dasein can find itself, viz., the condition of not being able to be anyone. This condition besets Dasein when it finds itself suffering anxiety, which is a global indifference to all the possibilities that present themselves to Dasein. Since "death" picks out this existential condition, rather than the ending of a human life, Heidegger can refer to death as a possible way to be Dasein. He could not do this if "death" had its normal meaning. Furthermore, we can make sense of Heidegger's apparently contradictory characterization of death – as the possible way to be in which Dasein is not able to be-there – if we distinguish what I have called the "thin" and the "thick" senses of "being" for Dasein. While in the condition Heidegger calls "death," Dasein is in the thin sense, in that its being is at issue for it, yet it is *not* able to be in the thick sense, in that it cannot understand who it is by pressing ahead into some definite way to be Dasein.

If this interpretation of the concept of death in *Being and Time* is right, we can gain some insight into related issues hinted at here. For instance, in developing this interpretation of death, it has been necessary to distinguish the structure of Dasein from the structure of life. In this way, we have a new avenue of access to Heidegger's denial that he is really engaged in a form of life-philosophy. We do not only have available these new opportunities, but are also confronted with new interpretive tasks. It will be necessary to develop new interpretations of other related phenomena. Not only those notions closely related to that of death, such as anticipation, authenticity, and resoluteness, but also those concepts built upon Heidegger's treatment of death, such as temporality.[21]

## Notes

1. Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. Alastair Hannay (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 75.
2. All references to *Being and Time* are to the 15th German edition: Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1979). All translations are my own, though of course I have relied heavily on Macquarrie and Robinson's English translation: *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). I have tried to indicate most of my divergences from Macquarrie and Robinson's translations of technical terminology, usually by giving the German in parentheses.
3. Paul Edwards (*Heidegger on Death: A critical Evaluation*, Monist Monograph No. 1 (LaSalle, Ill.: The Hegeler Institute, 1979)) explicitly considers the issue presented by Heidegger's claim that death is a possible way to be, and rejects it as nonsense (p. 22). He later claims that Heidegger equivocates on "possibility." Mostly Heidegger uses this term to refer to "alternatives ... which we know ourselves to be capable of choosing," (p. 27). In the discussion





of death, according to Edwards, Heidegger slides into using the term to refer to the total absence of experiences and behavior (p. 33). And though Edwards concludes that the term "possibility" is doing no work in Heidegger's formulation – since what Heidegger is referring to is really the *im*possibility of experiences – we can see that Edwards has interpreted death as a possible event that can befall Dasein, and thus that he is pursuing the interpretive strategy I want to consider.

Edwards's interpretation of Heidegger's concept of death as total annihilation, the utter absence of experiences, is difficult to defend. Edwards can think of nothing else that Heidegger could consistently mean by "the impossibility of any existence at all." Yet Heidegger insists, and Edwards recognizes that he insists, that one *not* read "death" as referring to an event that takes place at the end of one's life. Edwards forges ahead with his interpretation, even though it makes nonsense out of many of Heidegger's claims, as Edwards shows acidly and at great length. This comes out especially clearly in Edwards's Chapter 7, "Double-Talk about Survival After Death." Edwards points out that if one interprets death as utter nullity in the sense of unqualified non-existence, then it does not make any sense to claim (as Heidegger does at *S&Z*, pp. 247–248) that one's view is neutral with respect to the notion of an after-life. I should have expected that this would lead Edwards to question his interpretation of Heidegger's concept of death. Unfortunately, it does not.

4. Chief among those features are these: (i) Dasein's being is at issue in everything it does (*S&Z*, §9); (ii) Dasein's being is in each case mine (*S&Z*, §9); and (iii) Dasein is always already familiar with a world, a social milieu that is the horizon for the intelligibility of everything it does and everything it encounters within the world (*S&Z*, §12).
5. Schrag seems to adopt this strategy. See Calvin O. Schrag, *Existence and Freedom* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1961), p. 113. Gelven develops a somewhat more common approach, in which he claims that the issue *that is important* for existential treatments of deaths is "*what impending death can mean to one in the fullness of one's life.*" See Michael Gelven, *A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, Revised Edition (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 143. This leaves open the question of what "death" refers to in *Being and Time*.
6. The preliminary conception of death that Heidegger deploys throughout Chapter 1 of Division One is that death is the end of Dasein, as the passage above from *S&Z*, p. 259 indicates.
7. Note that in this passage the event that is being discussed is not death, but rather something else. This is indicated by Heidegger's liberal use of scare-quotes.
8. Though his interpretation is more complex and sophisticated, Gelven adopts this basic line of approach. See Gelven, p. 150.
9. Though very different, this "thin and thick" approach is inspired by Dreyfus and Rubin's attempt to make sense of death in their interpretation of death as Dasein's inability to define itself and give itself personal meaning. They are in effect distinguishing thin and thick sense of Dasein's being. See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Jane Rubin, "You Can't Get Something for Nothing: Kierkegaard and Heidegger on How Not to Overcome Nihilism," *Inquiry* 30 (1987): 33–75.
10. Since Dasein is characterized by "mineness" (*Jemeinigkeit*), it must always be addressed with a personal pronoun (*S&Z*, p. 42). Moreover, the question of

what Dasein is must become the question who Dasein is (*S&Z*, p. 45).

11. This is of course a classic existentialist thesis: the self is that which relates itself to itself (Kierkegaard), or existence precedes essence (Sartre).
12. This is a point developed at greath length in Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1991) and John Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person," *Nous* 16 (1982): 15–26.
13. Charles Taylor, "Self-Interpreting Animals," in *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 48.
14. This is a point recognized by many interpretations of Division Two, Chapter 1, though it is not really mined for implications. For example, Schrag understands that §48 has a negative result, but he does not draw the conclusion that Dasein does not end (in the sense of stopping). Rather, he folds the issue into the claim that Dasein's death, existentially understood, is being-towards-death. See Schrag, p. 112.
15. That it is these senses of stopping that Heidegger has in mind in the two passages quoted above is confirmed by the continuation of the first passage, the one from p. 245.
16. Each of the modes of stopping has a temporal and a spatial variety. I will focus on the temporal varieties.
17. And thus it is important to distinguish the possibilities of Dasein, its possible ways of being, which are specific abilities, from tasks or projects that are accomplished by Dasein. Dasein determines itself through its possibilities by means of understanding (*Verstehen*); it completes its tasks through circumspection (*Umsicht*).
18. Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, 6th ed. (München: R. Piper, 1985). (Heidegger refers to the third edition, and to pages 259–270, on death. The entire section on *Grenzsituationen* is found on pp. 229–280.)
19. I investigate the details of this Heidegger-Jaspers connection in my "Heidegger's Debt to Jaspers's Concept of the Limit-Situation," in *Heidegger and Jaspers*, ed. Alan M. Olson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, in press).
20. I use this term intentionally to hook up with Heidegger's description of anxiety.
21. I want to thank Frank Ambrosio, Bert Dreyfus, Steve Crowell, John Haugeland, Mark Okrent, Tom Rockmore, and Ted Schatzki, for their helpful comments on earlier drafts, as well as the faculty and students of the Philosophy Department at Bates College, who heard an earlier version of this paper.

# DASEIN, EXISTENCE AND DEATH

carol j. white

A few years ago Paul Edwards published two articles critiquing Heidegger's views on death. Lawrence Hinman took issue with Edward's reading of Heidegger.* Subsequently Edwards expanded his two studies and published them as the first volume in the Monist Monograph Series.** I want to re-open the debate on the subject, not in order to criticize Edwards in the same way Hinman did, but to argue against a belief that they both hold in common. Edwards claims that Heidegger's position can be reduced to the claim that (1) "unlike plants and animals, human beings know that they are going to die" and (2) "this knowledge influences them in various ways." Edwards finds this a platitude whose triviality has been hidden behind Heidegger's obscure, ponderous jargon (Edwards 60).

Hinman doesn't disagree with this articulation of Heidegger's thesis but rather tries to make Heidegger's view more interesting and important by filling in the rest of his position. Hinman argues that Heidegger is trying to show us how we can "make sense out of the possibility of one's own death." However, Hinman regretfully concludes that he is "honestly not certain whether it is possible" to make sense out of one's death, though Heidegger's efforts are a valiant attempt (Hinman 211).

I want to argue that the problem which Heidegger is addressing has been fundamentally misconceived by both these authors as well as many others, including James Demske, whose *Being, Man and Death* is a thorough investigation of Heidegger's remarks on death in works published during his lifetime.* I think that to understand what Heidegger is saying we must make a radical distinction between the death of a person and the existential death of Dasein. Heidegger isn't trying to make "sense" out of one's personal death. In fact, it is not clear that one's personal, physical death is the kind of thing that can have "sense" (*"Sinn"*) in his understanding of that notion. It is the sort of "natural event" which he suggests is "against sense" (*"widersinnig"*) and "can break in upon us and destroy us."**

As we examine Heidegger's conception of Dasein and its death, we should keep in mind what Heidegger always insisted was the sole goal of *Being and Time*. He reminds us at the beginning of Division Two before he starts his investigation of death:

> What we are *seeking* is the answer to the question about the meaning of Being . . . But to lay bare the horizon within which something like Being in general (*überhaupt*) becomes intelligible is tantamount to clarifying the possibility of having any understanding of Being at all — an understanding which itself belongs to the constitution of the entity called Dasein (231).

The common opinion among Heidegger commentators is that Heidegger broke off *Being and Time* after Division Two because his conception of death, resoluteness and temporality trapped him in a subjective view of the Being of Dasein from which he could find no way to

* *Lawrence M. Hinman, "Heidegger, Edwards, and Being-toward-Death,"* Southern Journal of Philosophy, *XVI (Fall, 1978), 193-212. Future page references to this article will be included in the text in parentheses and indicated by 'Hinman.'*

** *Paul Edwards,* Heidegger and Death: A Critical Evaluation *(La Salle, Illinois: Hegeler, 1979), His two earlier articles on this subject are: "Heidegger on Death as Possibility,"* Mind *LXXXIV (1975), 548-566; and "Heidegger and Death: A Deflationary Critique,"* The Monist, *Vol. 59, no. 2 (April, 1976), 161-186. Future page references to the first work will be included in the text in parentheses and indicated by 'Edwards.'*

* *James Demske,* Being, Man, and Death *(Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1970). Future page references to this book will be included in the text in parentheses and indicated by 'Demske.' For two other short replies to Edwards in a vein similar to Hinman's, see Jamshid Mirfenderesky's "Concerning Paul Edward's 'Heidegger on Death': A Criticism" in the* Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, *Vol. 13, No. 2 (May, 1982), 120-128, and Dan Magurshuk's "Heidegger and Edwards on* Sein-zum-Tode," The Monist, *Vol. 62, No. 1, (January, 1979), 107-118.*

** *Martin Heidegger,* Sein und Zeit, *twelfth edition (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 152. Future page references to this work will be included in the text and indicated by the page number in parentheses. This pagination is also given in the margins of the English edition:* Being and Time, *translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). My own translations frequently vary in both important and minor ways from this version. References to Heidegger's later marginal notes indicate the page number of the appendix of the* Gesamtausgabe *version of* Sein und Zeit *published by Klostermann. These page numbers are indicated by a following asterisk.*

proceed with his investigation of the meaning of Being.** My account of his analysis of death will show it to be in fact a step along the path of his announced quest.

**Existence and the Most Proper Being**

Since Heidegger describes death as "the possibility of the impossibility of existence in general *(überhaupt)*" (262) and "the most proper possibility" (250, 263), we need to consider the significance of two of Heidegger's technical terms: "existence" and "most proper" *(eigenst)*. Hinman warns us that "If one ignores what precedes it, the chapter on being-toward-death in BT is all but unintelligible, for Heidegger has developed a technical vocabulary in the preceding sections which is indispensable for understanding the chapter on the question of death" (Hinman 209f.). Unfortunately, Hinman ignores his own advice when it comes to these two crucial terms.

In order to understand both terms, we need to get clear first about the sort of entity that they are used to describe. It is Dasein, of course, but then what is Dasein? Heidegger says a number of times that Dasein is "the entity" that "we ourselves always are." Macquarrie and Robinson, as well as the translators of other works, persist in pluralizing Heidegger's singular term *"das Seiende,* i.e., "entity" or "what-is." Thus, *"das Seiende . . . sind wir je selbst"* becomes "we are ourselves the entities" (41), and *"das Sein des Seienden"* becomes "the Being of entities". (6) While I think that the pluralizing of 'entity' has had pernicious consequences for our understanding of the ontological level of Heidegger's analysis in *Being and Time* in general, I will only discuss the issue as it bears on the problem of death of Dasein. Heidegger analyzes three types of "entity" in *Being and Time:* Dasein, entity ready-to-hand, and entity present-at-hand.

'Dasein' is not just another word for 'person,' as the pluralization of 'entity' might suggest. We could not say "We ourselves are the person to be analyzed" unless we were speaking imperially, and Heidegger isn't. *He* isn't the entity under consideration. Rather, we all are. If Dasein is the entity that *we* are, then the death of this entity is not the same as the death of a person. Of course Heidegger does not deny that each person *is* Dasein. Dasein is "always mine" or *"je meinig."* However, he is proposing a very important, unusual conception of the relation between the individual and the species in regard to what we are, and this conception does have important consequences for his notion of the death of both individual people and Dasein as entity.[1]

In introducing his conception of the entity that we are, Heidegger claims that Dasein is "distinctive" *("ausgezeichnet")* when compared with other types of entity in that Dasein makes an issue of Being, or alternatively put, of what it is to be (11). In fact, he claims

** *Michael Zimmerman has provided the most recent attempt to show that* Being and Time *"foundered" because of a "subjective" and "voluntaristic" conception of human being. See his "The Foundering of* Being and Time," Philosophy Today, *XIX (Summer, 1975), 100-107. Zimmerman's recent book,* The Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity *(Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1981) offers a more detailed investigation of both the continuity and difference in Heidegger's early and later thought.*



that it is constitutive of what it is to be Dasein that this entity makes an issue of Being (12). The word 'Dasein' is supposed to function as a graphically ontological term: we are the entity through whom what it is "to be" *("Sein")* is revealed, and thus we are the "there" *("Da")* where Being is disclosed.

When Being is discovered to be questionable, various answers can be given as to what it "is." According to Heidegger, the question of Being was first raised by the early Greek philosophers, and they proposed various answers. "To be" was to be *chreon* or *moira* or *logos*. The questioning of Being launches Dasein into a history during the course of which Being has revealed itself in many more ways. In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger comments that Dasein's "foundation" happens "in the West for the first time in Greece." He adds:

> What was in the future to be called Being was set into work, setting the standard. The realm of entity thus opened up was then transformed into entity in the sense of God's creation. This happened in the Middle Ages. This entity was again transformed at the beginning and in the course of the modern age. Entity became an object that could be controlled and seen through by calculation.[2]

In this essay Heidegger is specifically talking about the way a work of art can manifest an understanding of Being; but thinkers, poets, statesmen, and others, as well as artists, provide the insight that changes our culture's understanding of what it is to be "entity."[3]

Dasein is distinctive in that it determines what it is for entity in general to be, and, at the same time, since its understanding of Being is constitutive of Dasein itself, it also determines what it is for us to be. In the above three major episodes in the history of our changing understanding of Being, we have taken ourselves to be the animal that speaks *(zoon logon echon)*, the image of God, and the conscious subject.

Heidegger calls Dasein's way of Being as an understanding of Being "existence" (12). Once again he is playing on the etymology of the term: he supposes that it derives from the prefix 'ex-' indicating 'out' or 'toward' and the Latin verb *'sistere'* meaning 'to make stand.' Dasein stands out from any other entity in that it takes a stand toward Being. Our "existence" in this sense determines our essence or what we take ourselves to be, e.g., speaking animal or image of God or conscious subject. Heidegger puts it: "The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence" (42).

Before we can discuss the death of Dasein as the possibility of the impossibility of this sort of "existence," we need to examine that other technical term, "most proper." As a product of its self-understanding, Dasein's "essence" changes; what we take ourselves to be is only "a possible way for it to be" (42). So what shall we call the characteristic that Dasein must have to be Dasein? Lacking ready-made words, Heidegger invents one: Dasein's "most proper *(eigenst)* Being" is "such that it has an understanding of Being" (15). Its understanding of Being, and consequently what it takes itself to be, may vary; but, as Dasein, it always has one. The word *'eigen'* means 'proper,' 'own,' 'inherent,' 'peculiar,' etc., and *'-st'* is the suffix of the superlative degree. What is "most proper" to Dasein's Being is that it has an understanding of Being. In addition, the "most proper possibility" of this most proper Being is for Dasein to relate itself to its own

Being, i.e. to understand itself. Heidegger comments: "That entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue relates itself to its Being as its most proper possibility" (42). Dasein is *"eigentlich"* or "properly" or "authentically" itself when it makes an issue of Being rather than taking the understanding of Being for granted. The etymological connection between *'eigenst'* and *'eigentlich'* should not be forgotten, even though it is lost in the standard translation.

### The Possibility of the Impossibility of Existence

At the beginning of Division Two of *Being and Time*, as if to remind us of the technicality of the term 'existence,' Heidegger remarks:

> The term 'existence' formally indicates that Dasein *is* as an understanding able-to-be *(Seinkönnen)* which in its Being makes an issue of this Being (231).

The meaning of 'existence' has been ignored in discussions of Heidegger's notion of death. Yet if existence is Dasein's Being, then we should ponder what it means for Dasein not to be, i.e., when and how Dasein is *not* "as an understanding able-to-be." Discussions of Heidegger's notion of death assume that Dasein dies when it ceases to be actual and that this happens when a person undergoes physical death. Or, if they recognize that Heidegger calls death a "way to be" (245) and that for him death is a matter of "Being toward death" *("Sein zum Tode")*, at best they consider death to be a matter of how a person cares about his physical death. Both assumptions are mistaken. Dasein's "death," in Heidegger's technical sense of this term, is very different from a person's "death" in the ordinary sense of the word. Heidegger calls the latter *"Ableben"* or "demise" (247).

Heidegger's later explanations of his use of the term 'existence' help clarify what is at issue in his notion of death. In the "Letter on Humanism" he explains:

> The sentence "Man ek-sists" is not an answer to the question of whether man actually is or not; rather, it responds to the question concerning man's "essence."[4]

Heidegger alters the spelling of 'existence' to emphasize its etymological connotations and its peculiar meaning in his philosophical vocabulary. Later in the same essay Heidegger says that his notion of existence in *Being and Time* did not refer to the actuality of the *ego cogito* but rather indicated Dasein's relation to Being (LH 222/343).

Consequently, we should see that in speaking of the "possibility of the impossibility of existence" Heidegger is not raising a question about the actuality of either man in general or an individual consciousness. He is not suggesting that at sometime in the future such actuality may be "impossible" or totally missing. As Heidegger indicates, his investigation of death is not in any way addressing the issue of life after physical death (247f.). He is not even raising a question about continued personal survival, let alone assuming a negative answer to such a question as both Edwards and Hinman seem to think.[5] The question Heidegger is raising concerns the character of Dasein's Being as existence. Such "standing out" toward Being involves "impossibility" even for the actually living Dasein or particular person.

In the "Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics" Heidegger further characterizes what he means by "existence." The "standing out" toward Being is not just a matter of consciousness being aware of something "outside" of itself. We aren't talking about a human being's consciousness of, e.g., dogs, trees, rocks, etc. Nor are we talking about something subjective or voluntary, as if it were up to each peron to adopt a certain attitude toward what it is to be. Rather, Heidegger says, this "standing out" is a "standing open" for "the openness of Being." The "standing out" doesn't signify getting out of some immanence of consciousness but rather being "out" in the openness of Being.[6] This "openness of Being" is the disclosure of Being which makes possible our understanding of Being. We "stand out" toward Being in the sense of being open for its revelation. Heidegger also calls the disclosure of Being the "truth of Being," giving the word 'truth' the meaning of the Greek term *'aletheia'* or 'unconcealedness.' Thus existence also means, as Heidegger puts it in the "Letter on Humanism," "standing out into the truth of Being" (LH 206/326).

The openness of Being grants Dasein its possibilities as "an understanding able-to-be." Dasein can be *as* existing because of its own "standing out into" a revelation of Being. For this sort of "existence" to be "impossible" is for existence to be closed off to possibilities instead of open to them. Heidegger's notion of death, like his notion of existence in general, does not deal with actuality or the lack of it but rather with the character of Dasein's Being.

### Dasein as Individual and Whole

Most of the problems involved in trying to understand what Heidegger is saying about death come from his own exposition of this notion in *Being and Time*. His discussion of two issues has proven to be especially misleading: the sense in which death "individuates" Dasein into its self and the sense in which it makes Dasein a "whole."

Heidegger claims that death "individuates" Dasein in some unique and important way, and we need to see what sort of "individual" it turns out to be. He says:

> Death does not just "belong" in an undifferentiated way to the proper Dasein *(dem eigenen Dasein)*; rather it lays claim to it as individual. The non-relational character *(Unbezüglichkeit)* of death as understood in anticipation individualizes Dasein into its self *(auf es selbst)*. This individualizing is a way in which the "there" is disclosed for existence (263).

The non-relational character of death and the nature of anticipation will be discussed below, but here I want to raise a question about the sort of "self" that is revealed in the individuation of the "there" *("Da")* of Dasein.

In a remark in a later section, Heidegger explains: ". . . when Dasein has been individualized into itself, it is for its self something that simply cannot be mistaken for anything else *(unverwechselbar)*" (277). This suggests that when the entity Dasein is "individualized" its Being cannot be confused with that of other entity, e.g., entity present-at-hand. A marginal note that Heidegger wrote in his own copy of *Sein und Zeit* also suggests that the individuation of Dasein's "self" has nothing to do with distinguishing one person from another. In a passage in Division One where he is discussing authenticity, he describes Dasein as existing "as its self *(als es selbst)*" (146). In the later comment he adds: "However not qua subject and individual or qua person" (443*).

Heidegger's referenes to Dasein as a "self" led the readers of *Being and Time* to think that we were investigat-

ing something like a personality or personal individuality. Heidegger may not have been completely clear in his own mind about what he was trying to say when he wrote this early work, but such marginal comments indicate that he can in retrospect see himself as on the way toward a position which he makes more explicit in later works. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* he comments about this notion of "self," substituting 'man' for 'Dasein':

> Man's selfhood means this: he must transform the Being that discloses itself to him into history and bring himself to stand in it. Selfhood does not mean he is primarily an "I" and an individual. This he is as little as he is a we, a community (IM 143f./110).

Dasein, or "man" taken in this sense, is not be be identified with the individual personality nor with a collection of such "I's." It is *the* entity which *we* are, the entity which understands Being and lets a disclosure of Being determine what it is. Later, in the "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger will comment that it is a mistake to pose the question of Dasein's Being in such a way that we expect to find as our answer "something like a person or object." He adds:

> . . . the personal, no less than the objective, misses and misconstrues the way of being *(das Wesende)* of ek-sistence as being-historical *(der seinsgeschichtlichen Ek-sistenz)* (LH 207/327).

Dasein's self is, so to speak, the condition for the possibility of understanding oneself as a personal "I." We must have an understanding of our mutual Being in order to take ourselves to be particular persons differentiated from one another. In another early work, *The Essence of Reasons,* Heidegger claims:

> Only because Dasein is determined by selfhood can an I-self relate "itself" to a thou-self. Selfhood is the presupposition of the possibility of being an "I" which is revealed only in the "thou." Selfhood is never related to a thou; it is neutral toward I-being and thou-being . . .[7]

The self under investigation in *Being and Time* is such an existential self; Dasein's selfhood is something we share in common, not what distinguishes one person from another. This notion cannot be fully explicated here, but we need to see that when we "individuate" Dasein we do not arrive at something like a unique "I." Correlatively, the death that individuates Dasein most sharply is not unique to such "I's" but rather is a characteristic of Dasein's Being. Contrary to what Hinman says, Heidegger is not addressing himself to the question of how each person is related to his own death (Hinman 197) nor claiming that "if my own death is a possibility which relates *only* to me, then it is a possibility which individualizes me down to myself" (Hinman 205). In fact, Hinman and Heidegger are simply not talking about the same sort of "death" since Hinman is talking about a person relating to what Heidegger calls "demise," i.e., the sort of "death" that Dasein confronts because it is embodied in living human beings whose life will come to an end.

The "end" which is an aspect of Dasein's Being is quite different from this sort of end of life. It is an existential structure of Dasein's Being. Heidegger tells us: ". . . the existential meaning of Dasein's coming to an end must be taken from Dasein itself, and we must show how such 'ending' can constitute *Being-a-whole* for the entity which *'exists'*" (242). The problem of death is first brought up when Heidegger raises the question of whether his analysis in Division One has captured the phenomenon of Dasein as a "whole." His preliminary discussion of this issue is bound to mislead, too, unless we heed his warning signs. The initially proposed answer is that the analysis hasn't captured Dasein as a whole because as long as Dasein exists something remains "still outstanding." Heidegger says:

> And if existence is definitive for Dasein's Being and if its essence is constituted in part by able-to-be, then, as long as Dasein exists, it must always as such an able-to-be not yet be *(noch nicht sein)* something (233).

With Heidegger's initial encouragement, the reader supposes that this "not yet" or "still outstanding" something is some event that hasn't happened yet but surely will. And, when this "not yet" which will make Dasein a "whole" is labeled Dasein's "end" or "death," we quite naturally suppose he is talking about the physical death of particular people which "completes" their lives.

This reading is not just encouraged but almost forced upon the reader by the English translation. The interjection of personalizing 'one's' leads us to think that we are talking about the nature of particular people rather than something we share in common. For example, Macquarrie and Robinson talk of "something still outstanding in one's potentiality-for-Being" where Heidegger speaks only of *"einen Ausstand an Seinkönnen"* (236). The added 'one's' makes it appear that such an "able-to-be" is unique or particular to a person rather than to Dasein as "the entity we ourselves are." Following this suggestion, Demkse, for example, claims that "my Being is unique and specific to me alone" (Demske 19). If we eliminate such 'one's,' which aren't present in Heidegger's German, we would more readily see that my Being is the same thing that makes us all Dasein, not what distinguishes one person from another. With the addition of the 'one's' Heidegger appears to be talking about something peculiarly personal, and what could be more personal in this view than a person's death? The "finitude of existence *(Endlichkeit der Existenz)*" becomes the "finitude of one's existence" (384).

So the common interpretation goes. Heidegger helps it along with his introductory musings in these sections. Even the reader thoroughly familiar with Heidegger's text, as Hinman, for example, obviously is, may not notice when the initial conceptions undergo radical changes. In arguing against Edwards, Hinman says:

> My own death is something still outstanding for me, something which has not yet occurred; in this sense it is a possibility. Heidegger clearly notes that this is the sense in which he is asserting that my death is for me a possibility (196).

In support of this Hinman refers to Heidegger's initial discussion on pp. 233-34 and ignores the fact that in following sections Heidegger will repeatedly deny that this sense of "not yet" is appropriate for an entity with Dasein's sort of Being, i.e., existence (243, 244, 245, 246, 250, 259, 325, 327). In fact Heidegger will say that the inauthentic understanding of death regards it precisely as such an event which hasn't happened yet but will in the future. He also repeatedly waves a red flag to warn us that the initial conception of the problem may be entirely inadequate because it is regarding Da-

sein as entity present-at-hand (236, 240, 241, 241f., 245, 248).

Heidegger's discussion in the opening sections of the chapter on death gets diverted into notions of "ending" which turn out to be appropriate only to entity present-at-hand or entity ready-to-hand. Heidegger eventually concludes that these other sorts of ending cannot suitably characterize the death of Dasein. In the sort of death appropriate to its Being, Dasein does not simply disappear or become finished. Dasein's sort of "end" is a way in which "Dasein gets a definite character ontologically" here and now (241).

The problem of getting Dasein as a "whole" and the character of what is "still outstanding" changes quite dramatically in the course of Heidegger's exposition. The problem first appeared to be that, since Dasein is "spread across" a time span, we cannot have the whole phenomenon of Dasein in our grasp until we each have arrived at our personal, physical death. Here Dasein's existence appears to be finite only in the sense that the individual people who embody it occupy a finite span of time. However, this conception treats Dasein as something present-at-hand, i.e., something which "comes along, has presence, and then disappears" (389). Heidegger will argue later in *Being and Time* that this "spanning" characteristic is a derivative phenomenon arising out of inauthentic Dasein. In fact Dasein itself isn't "lacking" anything because it is spread across a time span. What Dasein's authentic, primordial Being is "lacking" is not something that hasn't happened yet but rather a settled, secure Being. Dasein's Being always has something "outstanding" which is "unclosed" or "unsettled" *(eine ständige unabgeschlossenheit)* because its Being is an issue for it. However, this "not yet" aspect of its Being is not something yet to come in some future that hasn't happened yet. Since Dasein *is* as an understanding able-to-be, since it exists as an openness to the revelation of Being, what it *can* be is included in what it *is* now. Being toward the end is "something which, in the depths of its Being, every Dasein is" (317). Over the course of the discussion, the metaphor has changed from one of horizontal extension to one of vertical depth.

Death, Heidegger argues, is what puts an "end" to Dasein's Being. The "impossibility" of existence is not something yet to come but rather is what determines existence as finite here and now. As Heidegger says, Dasein "does not have an end at which it just stops but *exists finitely*" (329). This is not determined by an event in the future; it is a characteristic of Dasein as an understanding able-to-be which is also a not-able-to-be. Even though our Being is at issue for us, we cannot be in just any way. Our possibilities are limited by the fact that our able-to-be contains such an "end" within itself. Death "closes up" Dasein's Being as its "*abschliessende*" and determinate end (259). This end, Heidegger adds, is not something that Dasein only comes to in its demise. As he put his point earlier:

> The "end" of Being-in-the-world is death. This end, which belongs to the able-to-be — that is to say, to existence — limits and determines the always possible wholeness of Dasein (234).

### Being toward Death

After insisting that Dasein is always already its "not yet" and its "end," Heidegger adds:

> The "ending" meant by death does not signify *Zu-ende-Sein* of Dasein but rather a *Sein zum Ende* of this entity. Death is a way to be which Dasein takes over as soon as it is (245).

I leave the two crucial phrases untranslated in order to emphasize the difference. One important difference is obscured by the standard English translation: while *'Zu-Ende-sein'* is a phrase made by hyphenating its words, as Heidegger does with so many of the phrases he uses to describe aspects of Dasein's Being (e.g., *"In-sein," "Sich-vorweg-sein,"* etc.) *'Sein zum Ende'* is remarkable for its unadorned reference to *'Sein'*.

Dasein's death does not just signify that Dasein is, as Heidegger later corrects and modifies the phrase, *Zum-Ende-'sein,'* or simply over and done with, finished, at an end (234, 444*). It certainly does not mean this in the sense that Dasein would cease to be actual, as for example might happen if we blow ourselves up in a nuclear war. However, neither can the nature of its death be adequately determined simply by the notion of Dasein as *Zum-Ende-'sein'* in the sense that its current, actual possibilities come to an end, and this point surely lies behind Heidegger's comments (cf. 246). What we are interested in is not just *that* Dasein's possibilities come to an end, i.e., that it can only be in one way and not others, e.g., image of God or conscious subject. We are interested in why and how the possibilities are thus limited. This is a matter of Dasein's very way of Being, and, since its Being is determined by its relationship to Being, ultimately this is a matter of Being *überhaupt*. To understand Dasein's *Zum-Ende-'sein'* we must consider *Sein zum Ende*.

In regard to this distinction Heidegger also remarks that *"Zu-Ende-sein* implies existentially: *Sein zum Ende"* (250). How Dasein comes to an end raises the question of its relationship to Being as existence. If a revelation of Being is what gives Dasein its able-to-be as the entity which *is* its possibilities, then the "point," so to speak, where Dasein's possibilities leave off and its impossibilities begin is also determined by Being *überhaupt*. Heidegger is trying to capture the idea that Dasein's disclosure of Being is finite. There are some ways to be which Being has *not yet* revealed, but still this "something outstanding" is something that Dasein "can and will be" (233). A marginal note that Heidegger later adds at the place he introduces the notion of "Being toward death" (234) clarifies what he had in mind. He refers to this death as *"Sein des Nichtseins"* or "Being of not-Being" (444*). This not-Being is not absolutely nothing. Rather, we might say, it has the curious Being of the not-yet-Being.

Comments Heidegger makes in later works help further clarify this notion. One comment connects death with his famous musings about "nothing." He says:

> Death is the shrine of nothing, that is, of that which in every respect is never something that merely is entity but which nevertheless still presences as the mystery of Being. As the shrine of nothing, death harbours within itself the presencing of Being. As the shrine of nothing, death is the shelter *(Gebirg)* of Being. We now call mortals 'mortals' not because their earthly life comes to an end, but because they are capable of death as death.[6]

The odd use of the word *'Gebirg'* (which ordinarily means 'mountain range') is surely intended to create a new meaning for the term by calling upon an apparent etymological connection with the verb *'bergen,'* which

means 'to conceal,' 'to save,' or 'to shelter.' The term reminds the reader that Heidegger says that Being both reveals itself and conceals itself; it is both *"Unverborgenheit"* and *"Geborgenheit."* In another later remark Heidegger explicitly says that "in death the supreme concealedness of Being gathers."[9]

In death Dasein confronts the limits of its disclosedness. In *Being and Time* Heidegger says: "With death Dasein stands before itself in its *most proper* possibility. In this possibility the very Being of Dasein as Being-in-the-world is at issue" (250). Death is Dasein's most proper possibility because in it Dasein's most proper Being is at issue. To be or not to be is indeed the question. Heidegger adds: "Its death is the possibility of no-more-able-to-be-there *(Nicht-mehr-dasein-können)*." In Heidegger's initial discussion, with its confusing admixture of a present-at-hand conception of Dasein, he had spoken of *"Nichtmehrdasein"* (237), but here he revises the phrase to make it clear that the conception of death that is appropriate to the entity that *is* its possibilities is one indicating not its lack of actuality but its lack of possibilities. It is not that Dasein is no more but that it is not able-to-be Dasein anymore.

Heidegger's metaphoric description of Dasein as a "clearing" *("Lichtung")* can illustrate this notion graphically. The clearing is the realm of possibilities that are revealed to Dasein by Being. Beyond it lie impossibilities in the realm of Being's concealment. In an essay on the pre-Socratic thinkers, Heidegger comments that the essence of mortals — which is to be the "there" in which Being reveals itself — calls upon mortals "to heed the call which beckons them towards death." He adds:

> As the outermost possibility of mortal Dasein, death is not the end of the possible but the highest keeping (the gathering sheltering) of the mystery of calling disclosure.[10]

Dasein's "outermost" *("äusserst")* possibility, a phrase which Heidegger also uses frequently in *Being and Time*, marks the boundary between the possible and the impossible, as far as Dasein's Being goes. What lies "beyond" that possibility cannot be "fetched over" by Dasein into its clearing, i.e., the possibility is *"unüberholbar,"* and here the "there" of Being must simply give itself up to the darkness beyond (cf. 264). If, as Heidegger said in the remark I quoted earlier, Dasein's selfhood lies in transforming Being into history and bringing itself to stand in it, then Dasein gives its self up when Being eludes its disclosing light.

Heidegger also refers to death as Dasein's "non-relational" *("unbezügliche")* possibility (250). Everything to which Dasein relates, all relations between people and relations to the objects with which we concern ourselves, are relations within Dasein's *"Bezug"* or the "network" of possibilities laid out by its existence. Existence is originally defined as that Being toward which Dasein can and somehow always does relate itself (12). But death is precisely "the possibility of the impossibility of every relating to . . ., of every existing" (262). The non-relational possibility of death is really an impossibility when compared with the possibilities within Dasein's clearing: it is the limit of Dasein's Being. Our relationships to objects and to people will "fail" when Dasein's very Being is placed at issue (263). They are determined by this Being, not vice versa. In confronting death Dasein is thrown back upon itself to disclose its able-to-be.

### Inauthentic and Authentic Being toward Death

Given this exposition of Heidegger's odd notion of death, we can see why he claims that "factically there are many who don't know about death" and that though "Dasein dies factically as long as it exists" most of us have an inauthentic understanding of the nature of our death (251f.). This inauthentic understanding of death flees the anxiety that comes over Dasein when it recognizes the groundlessness of its Being as merely a possible way to be. Inauthentic Being toward death flees anxiety in the face of death by turning it into simple fear in the face of some oncoming event. Inauthenitc understanding of death regards it precisely as demise, i.e., as the physical death that awaits us as particular, living things (cf. 254 and 251). Inauthentic understanding takes Dasein's Being to be precarious only in that we each face personal, physical extinction. Thus Dasein avoids recognizing the more profound precariousness that invades its very Being here and now. This threat arises out of its character as the "there" of Being (265), not out of the biology of the living creatures embodying Dasein.

Heidegger's discussion of death plays both explicitly and tacitly on the analogy between death regarded as the demise of a person and death regarded as the existential end of Dasein. Explicitly he claims that awareness of demise or of "cases of death," as Heidegger also calls the "ending" of particular people, may be what leads Dasein to pay attention to death at all (257). Heidegger refers the reader to Tolstoy's story, *"The Death of Ivan Ilych,"* to illustrate the inauthentic understanding of death as the demise that happens to everyone sooner or later (254). We can note that Ivan doesn't just come to realize that this "everyone" includes himself (which we might say is a matter of accepting one's demise), but he also comes to question the understanding of Being which he has taken for granted (which we might call accepting Dasein's most proper Being).[11] I would also say that throughout Heidegger's discussion of the inauthentic and authentic views of death he tacitly relies on an analogy or proportion between my demise as a person and my existential death as Dasein. I am to my death qua person as Dasein is to its death qua Dasein. In both respects I confront a "nothingness" impenetrable to my understanding, and death constitutes a sort of "other side" to what is.[12]

The continual interplay between the inauthentic and authentic notions of death unfortunately only makes Heidegger's text more obscure, and the illumination that this analogy might cast, if made explicitly, is lost. Once one realizes how existential death differs from personal demise, one notices how frequently Heidegger puts words such as 'death' and 'dying' in scare quotes when he is either referring to the common conception of death or making a remark that is intentionally ambiguous. The tacit analogy, which lets him say similar things about both conceptions, actually hinders the distinction from being as clear as it should be.

In contrast to the inauthentic conception of death, authentic Being toward death manifests what it is to be Dasein as the entity through which Being is revealed. Most of our discussion has emphasized the meaning of the word 'impossibility' in the phrase 'the possibility of the impossibility of exis-

tence' by, e.g., contrasting it with non-actuality. But to understand fully Heidegger's notion of authentic Being toward death, we need to bring out the significance of the term 'possibility'. Why doesn't Heidegger just speak of the "impossibility of existence"? Contrary to what Edwards thinks, the term 'possibility' is not "superfluous" or "fantastically misleading" (Edwards 33); nor does it simply mean, as Hinman says in reply, that death is something that hasn't happened yet. Dasein's sort of impossibility of existence is indeed a possibility; what is impossible now is still in some sense possible. Dasein's understanding of Being can change, and new ways of Being are not always impossible. What does not have Being *simpliciter* still has the Being of not-Being. Being can reveal the way of Being of entity that was formerly concealed, as happened in the shifts from the Greek to the medieval and from the medieval to the modern worlds.

Considering Heidegger's delight in playing with the etymological connections of words, it is not too far-fetched to suggest that when he describes death as the "measureless impossibility of existence" (262) and when he italicizes the *'Un'* of *'Unmöglichkeit'* (306), he is playing on the fact that the *'Un-'* prefix can mean 'excessive amount' as well as 'not.' (Compare the English prefix 'in-' of 'indiscreet' and 'inflammable,' or consider the German words *'Unmasse'* and *'Unsumme,'* which both mean not 'nothing' but enormous number or vast quantity. Similarly, an *"Untier"* is not a non-animal but a "very animal" animal, i.e., a brute, a monster.) Heidegger may be playing on this double meaning, and capturing an important aspect of Dasein's finite existence, when he says that in authentic Being toward death, possibility "becomes 'greater and greater;' that is to say, the possibility reveals itself to be such that it knows no measure *(mass)* at all, no more or less, but signifies the measureless impossibility of existence" (262). Our particular current understanding of Being precludes some possibilities of Being as not-possibilities for us, but yet we are open to new possibilities of Being just as the Greeks and medieval people were. The possible ways Being could reveal itself are "measureless."[13]

Authentic Being toward death opens Dasein up for new possibilities. Heidegger describes authentic Being toward death as *"Vorlaufen"* of the possibility of death. The word literally means 'to run ahead' or 'to run in front,' and the derivative word *'Vorläufer'* means 'forerunner' or 'harbinger.' Authentic Dasein is in fact a harbinger of a new understanding of Being. It "runs ahead" to the edge of its current clearing in order to disclose what "can be in a time" as entity (338). Heidegger notes: "Being toward death as running ahead of possibility for the first time *possibilizes* this possibility and makes it free as such" (262). Authentic Being toward death thus makes some possibility possible. Presumably, it was in some sense not so before. We cannot fix the exact time when such a change in the understanding of Being happens, but Heidegger can comfortably say that in such a moment (the *"Augenblick"* or "moment of insight") both "possibility turns into impossibility" (308) and "the utter impossibility of existence becomes possible" (265). A change in the understanding of Being leaves old possibilities behind and lets new ones take their place in the "there" of Being.



## ENDNOTES

1. Heidegger's complicated and obscure notion of *"Jemeinigkeit"* or "always-mine-ness" is intended to capture this idea that Dasein is always the Dasein of particular people and that individuals stand in a relationship of "care" to their Being. Heidegger's notion can only be adequately understood in relation to Kierkegaard's equally obscure claim that the individual is "both himself and the race." See Kierkegaard's *Concept of Anxiety*, translated by Reidar Thomte (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 28f.
2. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," translated by A. Hofstadter in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 76f. See "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," *Holzwege*, edited by F. W. von Herrmann, Vol. 5 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klosterman, 1977), p. 64f.
3. See Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 62, for a description of authentic history and "world-building." Future references to this work will be included in the text in parentheses and indicated by 'IM.' The second page number indicates the page in the German original: *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953). See p. 47f. for this reference.
4. Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," translated by F. Capuzzi in *Basic Writings*, edited by D. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 207. Future references to this work will be included in the text in parentheses and indicated by 'LH.' The second number indicates the page number in the German original: "Brief über Humanismus," in *Wegmarken*, edited by F.W. von Herrmann, Vol. 9 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1976). See p. 326f. for this reference.
5. Edwards accuses Heidegger of "double-talk" on the issue of life after death because he assumes that the "impossibility of existence" can only refer to the "totality of the destruction" of personal consciousness at physical death. (See Edwards p. 60.) Hinman seems to think the "absolute nullity" which Heidegger equates with the "possibility of the impossibility of existence" is an annihilation brought by physical death. (See Hinman p. 200.)
6. Heidegger, "The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics," *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, second edition, edited by Walter Kaufmann (New York: New American Library, 1975), p. 271f. See "Einleitung zu: 'Was Ist Metaphysik?'" in *Wegmarken*, p. 374.
7. Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons*, translated by T. Malick (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 87. The text of the German original is on the facing page.
8. Heidegger, "The Thing" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 178. See "Das Ding" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, fourth edition (Pfullingen: Neske, 1978), p. 171.
9. Heidegger, "Language," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 200. See "Die Sprache" in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), p. 23.
10. Heidegger, "Moira" in *Early Greek Thinking*, translated by D. Krell and F. Capuzzi (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 101. See "Moira" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 248.
11. See Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych and Other Stories* (New York: New American Library, 1960). Although Tolstoy's message has a moral dimension which is absent in Heidegger's notion of authenticity and inauthenticity, some of Ivan's thoughts parallel Heidegger's points. For example, it occurs to Ivan "that his scarcely perceptible attempts to struggle against what was considered good by the most highly qualified people, those scarcely noticeable impulses which he immediately supressed, might have been the real thing and all the rest false" (p. 152). See also p. 148.
12. Some remarks that Rilke makes obviously strike a responsive chord in Heidegger, but I have resisted quoting them in the body of the paper since sorting out the difference between the two thinkers would require too much space. In "Wozu Dichter?" Heidegger quotes Rilke as saying: "Like the moon, so life has a side that is constantly turned away from us, and which is not life's opposite but its completion to perfection, to plenitude, to the truly whole and full sphere and globe of Being." Rilke also comments: "Death is the *side of life* that is turned away from us, unilluminated by us." Heidegger adds: "Death and the realm of the dead belong to the whole of Being as its other side. That realm is 'the other network *(Bezug)*,' i.e., the other side of the whole network of the Open." See "Wozu Dichter?" in *Holzwege*, p. 302. My translation varies slightly from the one by Albert Hofstadter in "What Are Poets For?" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 124.
13. At least so it appears in the discussion of Dasein's limitations in *Being and Time*. Later, in works such as *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* as well as "Time and Being" and the seminar on it, Heidegger will argue that Being itself is finite, not just Dasein's disclosure of it.

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# Metaphysics, Metontology, and the End of *Being and Time*

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In 1928 Heidegger argued that the transcendental philosophy he had pursued in *Being and Time* needed to be completed by what he called "metontology." This paper analyzes what this notion amounts to. Far from being merely a curiosity of Heidegger scholarship, the place occupied by "metontology" opens onto a general issue concerning the relation between transcendental philosophy and metaphysics, and also between both of these and naturalistic empiricism. I pursue these issues in terms of an ambiguity in the notion of "grounding" in *Being and Time* and in the works of what I call Heidegger's "metaphysical decade" (1927–1937), defending a phenomenological conception (giving priority to the theory of meaning) against what proves to be the illusory idea that metaphysical grounds are presupposed in such transcendental philosophy.

## §1. Introduction

The term "end" in my title should be understood in three senses:

(1) Heidegger's unfinished book ends, concludes in §83, with a series of questions that are to prepare the way for the sequel, an interpretation of the meaning of being in terms of time. This preparation consists, strangely enough, in questioning the appropriateness of the method used in the previous four hundred or so pages. The analysis of Dasein's ontological structure is, Heidegger now reminds us, "only *one way* which we may take."[1] Indeed, "whether this is the *only* way or even the right one at all can be decided only *after one has gone along it*." At the end of *Being and Time*, then, can we say

[1] The German reads: "Die Herausstellung der Seinsverfassung des Daseins bleibt aber gleichwohl nur *ein Weg*. Das *Ziel* ist die Ausarbeitung des Seinsfrage überhaupt." Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1976), p. 436; *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 487. The apposition of emphasized terms—*ein Weg* and *Ziel*—suggests that Heidegger is emphasizing not, as the Macquarrie and Robinson translation has it, that this is one way among others, but that it is in general only on the way, not yet at the goal. Some justification for the translation is found, however, in the sentence I cite next in the text, which is separated from this one by a paragraph. As shall be seen in what follows, Heidegger stands here at a moment of methodological crisis. Future references to *Being and Time* will be given in the text, citing first the English and then the German pagination. I have modified the translations where I saw fit, without further comment.

whether the path has been the right one? Only if we know what was to be accomplished by its means—hence, a second sense of "end":

(2) The end, or aim, of *Being and Time* is perhaps best understood through a comparison that Heidegger himself increasingly employed in the later 1920s, viz., with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which Kant described as "a treatise on the method, not a system of the science itself."[2] "Method" in this transcendental sense means demonstrating the conditions of possibility for synthetic apriori knowledge, preliminary to working out a system of such knowledge. Construing Kant's synthetic apriori knowledge as "ontological knowledge," Heidegger views transcendental critique as a reflection on the "ontological ground" of ontology. Similarly, the aim of *Being and Time* is to lay the groundwork for ontological knowledge (of the "meaning of being"), but in place of Kant's focus upon the cognitive comportment of *judging*, Heidegger turns first to the interrogative comportment of raising the *question* of being. Where Kant locates the ground of ontological knowledge in "apriori synthesis," Heidegger locates it in the "understanding of being" (*Seinsverständnis*) presupposed in all questioning. For this reason the focus of reflection falls on "Dasein," a *terminus technicus* indicating that being who, in a pre-philosophical way, necessarily raises questions about its own being and thereby provides the inescapable starting point for philosophical inquiry, "the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*" (BT 487, 62; SZ 436, 38).

But if, given the aim of showing how ontological knowledge is possible, Dasein has a peculiar claim on our attention, by the end of *Being and Time* Heidegger detects a "fundamental problem that still remains 'veiled'" (BT 487; SZ 436). For if the possibility of ontological knowledge lies in Dasein's *pre-philosophical* understanding of being, must not any such knowledge be limited to the particular, finite perspective occupied by the questioner? Heidegger has all along acknowledged—indeed emphasized—that philosophical inquiry is nothing but a "radicalization" of that everyday yet "essential" tendency that Dasein has to question the meaning of its being, and that thus his own inquiry is ultimately "ontically rooted [*verwurzelt*]" (BT 35, 34; SZ 15, 13). But when Heidegger asks whether "ontology allows of being *ontologically* grounded [*begründen*], or rather requires in addition an *ontic* ground [*Fundamentes*]," he cannot be referring to the previously described priority of Dasein, for he immediately appends the further question, "and *which* entity must take on this function of grounding?" This question would make no sense if "ontic ground" merely referred to Dasein, the inquirer, as the inescapable starting point for philosophy (BT 487; SZ 436). It appears rather that when Heidegger asks for an "entity" in which to ground ontological knowledge he stands poised to make a move that has since become familiar in philosophy, namely, to relativize such knowledge to some aspect of the context in which it arises. To ascribe a grounding function to the entity, "nature," for example, might yield something like that "naturalism" which seeks to explain ontological knowledge in terms of causal relations between environment and brain states. Similarly, to embrace the entity, "history," as such a ground might yield a kind of "historicism" in which the content of one's thought, one's ontological knowledge, is explained with reference to the conceptual resources of one's historical milieu.[3] Other candidates for the grounding entity could be proposed—society, language, even God—but the fact that in entertaining the possibility of an ontic ground of ontology Heidegger must ask "which" entity or context is to serve this function signals a methodological crisis that threatens the aim of *Being and Time*, viz., to make the transition from Dasein's understanding of being to the meaning of being. Hence, a final sense of "end":

(3) The end of *Being and Time* also means the collapse of its project, the demise of fundamental ontology. What happened? Why was the announced sequel to *Being and Time* never published? This question, deeply entwined with the problem of the so-called "turn" (*Kehre*) in Heidegger's thinking, has occasioned much commentary. Our angle on it shall be established by the observation that at first the idea of a turn was immanent to the project of *Being and Time* itself; only later did it take on, in Heidegger's self-interpretation, the status of a turn *away* from that project, a rejection of its grasp on the problem. Though examining the immanent turn suggests an interpretation of the turn in the broader sense, that is not my main quarry. Instead, I shall show how the immanent turn at the end of *Being and Time* gets entan-

[2] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 25 (Bxxii).

[3] The execution and implications of these distinct explanatory proposals differ markedly, of course. Heidegger's ontological knowledge is knowledge of meaning. Appealing to a causal theory, the naturalist might offer an account of such "ontological knowledge" that eliminates it altogether. See, for example, John McDowell's account of Quine's notion of "empirical significance" in *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1994), pp. 131–33. The historicist, on the other hand, typically argues that the intentional "content" of a claim to ontological knowledge depends upon linguistic conditions obtaining at a particular time; and further (if she is a pragmatist) that these conditions are themselves a function of historically contingent social practices, and so on. Here meaning is not eliminated, but justification is tied to what the norms inherent in current conditions and practices allow. Heidegger is often taken to espouse something like the historicist view, but if he does espouse it it is on the basis of phenomenological considerations. This means that the differences between naturalism and historicism as *ontic* explanatory proposals are not decisive in context of the present essay. For the pertinent question after 1927 is whether the situatedness of ontological knowledge, already attested phenomenologically, can become the theme of an ontic *inquiry*. Empirical inquiries into natural and historical conditions are of course possible, but they cannot (on Heidegger's view) yield grounds *for* ontological knowledge since they presuppose such knowledge. Heidegger's failed search for another sort of inquiry into this situatedness—designated "metaphysical" or "metontological"—is the topic of the present paper.

gled with the very different issue of an "ontic ground" of ontology. To ask *why* Heidegger imagines that there should be an ontic ground of ontology is to expose a latent inconsistency in his *magnum opus*. Though I analyze this inconsistency in terms of an opposition between phenomenology and metaphysics (the terms in which Heidegger formulates the turn), the problem can be seen to have far wider provenance. For "phenomenology" here represents that aspect of Heidegger's project that adheres to the critical-transcendental formulation of philosophical questions, whereas "metaphysics"—the heading under which an ontic ground is sought—turns out to be a virtual cipher for any appeal to "contextualizing" discourses with pretensions to provide independent grounds for the transcendental problematic.

Though Heidegger did not immediately grasp the problem—indeed, he places great weight on his conviction that "ontology can only be founded ontically," a fact that "no one before me has explicitly seen or stated"[4]—the collapse of his project results from the inconsistent belief that a turn is to be made from phenomenology to metaphysics. Kept at bay in *Being and Time* (1927), this inconsistency comes glaringly to light in an Appendix to Heidegger's last Marburg lecture course, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (1928). In order to complete his project, Heidegger here demands something called "metontology," a "turning around [*Kehre*], where ontology itself expressly runs back into the metaphysical ontic in which it implicitly always remains."[5] To ask what metontology could be is to uncover the precise point where phenomenological and metaphysical (pre-transcendental) motifs confront one another. This confrontation occupies Heidegger for a decade until, conceding in effect that appeal to an ontic ground involves what Kant calls "transcendental illusion," he formulates his idea for "overcoming" (*Überwindung; Verwindung*) metaphysics. Since Heidegger often seems to suggest that overcoming metaphysics leaves important aspects of the phenomenological project in place, it might be said that *Being and Time* did not altogether collapse and that Heidegger continued in the spirit of the claim that "only as phenomenology is ontology possible" (BT 60; SZ 35).

## §2. The Language of Metaphysics

Perhaps the best way of introducing the argument is to consider some famous passages in which Heidegger explains why *Being and Time* was never completed. In his 1947 "Letter on Humanism" he writes that the crucial section

[4] Letter to Karl Löwith (20 August 1927), in *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers*, vol. II, ed. Dietrich Pappenfuss and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), p. 36.

[5] Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, Gesamtausgabe Bd. 26, ed. Klaus Held (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), p. 201; *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, tr. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 158. Future references given in the text, with German (GA26) followed by English (MFL) pagination.





on "Time and Being," in which the immanent turn was to be made, was "held back because thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics."[6] Crucially, the "and" here indicates that the thinking that failed did not already employ the language of metaphysics; rather, at a certain moment it turned to the language of metaphysics for help. The "and" thus distinguishes two distinct phases of Heidegger's thought: on the one hand, the thinking that failed employed the vocabulary of hermeneutic phenomenology, as in the published portion of *Being and Time*; on the other hand, the unhelpful language of metaphysics was the traditional Kantian-Leibnizian-Aristotelian language (specifically excluded from *Being and Time* in favor of its notorious neologisms) which Heidegger began to speak around 1928 and which he once more abandoned in the mid-1930s, when he called for overcoming metaphysics. Theodore Kisiel has labeled the years between 1916 and 1927 Heidegger's "phenomenological decade"; I suggest that the years between 1927 and 1937 are Heidegger's "metaphysical decade."[7]

Though crucial to my argument, this reading of the conjunction as indicating two distinct phases of Heidegger's thought is not universally shared. Typically the reference to metaphysics is understood to include the whole transcendental project of *Being and Time*. So Jean Grondin writes that "what the 'Letter on Humanism' teaches or confirms is that *Being and Time* fails to say this *Kehre*, remaining in a certain respect prisoner of the horizon of the intelligibility of metaphysics"[8]—an interpretation suggested by the later Heidegger's tendency to see the entire tradition, including his earlier thought, as part of the "history of metaphysics" that needs to be overcome. Yet precisely in our passage Heidegger seems interested in preserving a nuance of difference. More revealing is David Krell's remark that immediately following the publication of *Being and Time* Heidegger "still hopes to rejoin" the

[6] The German reads: "Der fragliche Abschnitt wurde zurückgehalten, weil das Denken im zureichenden Sagen dieser Kehre versagte und mit Hilfe der Sprache der Metaphysik nicht durchkam." Martin Heidegger, "Brief über den 'Humanismus'," in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), p. 325; "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 231.

[7] Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 59. Ryoichi Hosokawa, "The Conception of *Being and Time* and the Problem of Metaphysics," *Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters Kyushu University*, forthcoming (pp. 20–21), has seen this quite clearly: During the late 1920s "the conception of fundamental ontology in *Being and Time* is transformed into that of metaphysics," and this "period of Heidegger's own metaphysics can be followed up to the first and second lectures on Nietzsche (WS 1936/37, SS 1937)"; hence "it is a great mistake if one maintains that Heidegger tries to overcome metaphysics beginning in 1930." See also his extremely valuable "Heidegger und die Ethik," *Phänomenologie der Praxis* (1989), p. 256.

[8] Jean Grondin, "Prolegomena to an Understanding of Heidegger's Turn," in *Sources of Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 64.

"tradition of metaphysics" in a "positive and fruitful way"[9]—implying a certain distance between *Being and Time* and that tradition. Having noted that in *Being and Time* the term "metaphysics" almost always occurs in scare-quotes, Joanna Hodge captures the decisive point: after *Being and Time* Heidegger is "trying to retrieve a *disquotational* use of the term 'metaphysics'."[10] To support my reading of the conjunction, then, a brief look at the "quotational" use in *Being and Time* is necessary.

The tension between metaphysics and phenomenology in Heidegger's thought goes back to his student years, when metaphysics was associated above all with neo-Scholasticism and its defense of Aristotelian realism against neo-Kantian epistemological idealism. In the debate over whether logic and theory of knowledge presupposed a metaphysics of the object, a theory of "ontological truth," Heidegger took the "critical" side.[11] Though Heidegger did not think that critical philosophy presupposed a metaphysics, he did believe that it *led* to one: transcendental theory of knowledge is to be completed by "an ultimate metaphysical-teleological interpretation of consciousness."[12] Rather than developing such a metaphysics, however, between 1917 and 1927 Heidegger worked at the transformation of phenomenology into a "hermeneutics of facticity," an ontology intended as an immanent development of the critical-transcendental impulse. Even Heidegger's renewed interest in Aristotle during this period should not be seen as an attempt to revive metaphysics but to recover a more phenomenological kind of questioning concealed by the Scholastic tradition. Thus, while the project of *Being and Time* may be interpreted as a "repetition" or retrieval of Aristotle's "first philosophy,"[13] that retrieval casts itself as a transcendental inquiry opposed to then-current conceptions of metaphysics. Following Husserl, Heidegger saw phenomenological method as a liberation from traditional metaphysical pseudo-problems: mind-body dualism, doubts about the external world, realism/idealism debates, and so on. In *Being and Time* the term "ontology"

[9] David Farrell Krell, *Intimations of Mortality* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), p. 39.

[10] Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 177.

[11] In his 1914 review of Charles Sentroul's *Kant und Aristoteles*, for example, Heidegger rejects the theory of "ontological truth," concluding that "even today the perspective of the theory of science is lacking in aristotelian scholastic philosophy." In contrast to the Kantian theory of knowledge, Aristotle's is "from the beginning heavily burdened with metaphysics." *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), pp. 52, 50.

[12] Heidegger, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, in *Frühe Schriften*, p. 348. An inconsistency similar to the one that leads metontology to a dead end already infects Heidegger's earlier concept of metaphysics, however. A partial account can be found in my "Making Logic Philosophical Again (1912-1916)," *Reading Heidegger from the Start*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and John Van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 55–72.

[13] As has been shown in convincing detail by Ryoichi Hosokawa, "*Sein und Zeit* als 'Wiederholung' der Aristotelischen Seinsfrage," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* vol. 94, no. 2 (1987).



does not "indicate some definite philosophical discipline standing in interconnection with others;" nor does it "have to measure up to the tasks of some discipline that has been presented beforehand" (BT 49; SZ 27). Further, method demands that ontological language be scrutinized for metaphysical prejudices through a deconstruction (*Destruktion*) of the history of ontology. As in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, such traditional preconceptions are to be put out of play.

There are two main reasons, then, why *Being and Time* surrounds the term "metaphysics" with scare-quotes. First, it serves notice that Heidegger's project is not to be confused with the popular postwar turn from critical neo-Kantianism toward neo-Hegelianism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and the like; and second, it points toward a new *sort* of inquiry whose nature can be established only on the ground of Heidegger's transcendental-phenomenological project. An example of the first is found in the claim that the question of being has been forgotten "even though in our time we deem it progressive to give our approval to 'metaphysics' again" (BT 21; SZ 2), and the second in the claim that "what might be discussed under the topic of a 'metaphysic of death' lies outside the domain of an existential analytic of death" and presupposes "an understanding...of the ontology of the aggregate of entities as a whole" (BT 292; SZ 248). We shall see that the intelligibility of metontology hinges on whether the "language of metaphysics" can help articulate what an inquiry into this "aggregate of entities as a whole" might be.

If it is therefore plausible to suggest that the "and" in Heidegger's 1947 recollection indicates a distinction, important to his thought in 1927, between phenomenology and metaphysics, it becomes possible to argue that the collapse of *Being and Time* has less to do with phenomenology than with what proved to be a *transitory positive* evaluation of metaphysics. Yet the same recollection also seems to preclude the claim that Heidegger resolved the inconsistency in *Being and Time* by overcoming metaphysics in favor of phenomenology, for it suggests that the hermeneutic phenomenology of *Being and Time* failed. But what about it failed? Is there evidence for how we should understand the failure, especially given Heidegger's statement that "the thinking that hazards a few steps in *Being and Time* has even today not advanced beyond that publication," or that "the road it has taken remains even today a necessary one"?[14] A clue is found in Heidegger's explanation that "in the poverty of its first breakthrough" the sort of thinking at work in *Being and Time* failed because it did not yet "succeed in retaining the essential help of phenomenological seeing while dispensing with the inappropriate concern

[14] The first remark is found in "Letter on Humanism," p. 246 (*Wegmarken*, p. 339); the second is from the 1953 "Author's Preface to the Seventh Edition" of *Sein und Zeit*, in which Heidegger announces that the promised second half of the text "could no longer be added."

with 'science' and 'research'."[15] The "concern with 'science' and 'research'," it seems, and not "phenomenological seeing," spoils the project of *Being and Time*.

It would be a lengthy task to unpack this statement fully, but for the contrast between phenomenology and metaphysics it is not necessary to do so. Decisive is the connection between phenomenological "seeing" and the idea of *grounding* philosophical practice and discourse in the matter (*die Sache*) that calls for and authorizes thinking. Heidegger's appeal to phenomenological seeing recalls Husserl's "principle of all principles" underlying the phenomenological theory of evidence (*Evidenz*): "every originary presentative intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition" such that "everything originarily...offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there."[16] The force of this principle for Husserl is to insist that grounding or justification in philosophy ultimately lies in direct confrontation, however achieved, with the matters in question and not in dialectical or logical theory-construction concerning these matters, however useful or even indispensable these may at times be. Though Heidegger criticizes Husserl's view of evidence in various ways—challenging the reliance on visual metaphors, bringing out its interpretive structure—it remains a significant element of his thinking to the end of his life.[17] In contrast, as I shall now argue, Heidegger's transitory positive evaluation of metaphysics after *Being and Time* results from an "inappropriate concern with 'science' and 'research'," an *esprit de système* that originates in his renewed enthusiasm for Kant and brings to the surface a latent inconsistency in *Being and Time* between phenomenological and metaphysical senses of "ground." What leads Heidegger's project astray is its flirtation with a "disquotational" sense of metaphysics largely motivated by his desire to find a successor discipline—a "metaphysical ontic" or "metontology"—to the dogmatic metaphysics ruled out by Kant's Transcendental Dialectic.

15 Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," pp. 258–59 (*Wegmarken*, p. 353).

16 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, tr. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), p. 44.

17 To argue the point fully would require a separate essay, but the basic idea has been sketched by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Der Begriff der Phänomenologie bei Heidegger und Husserl* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988), p. 51, who argues that the later Heidegger no longer reflects on phenomenological method or describes his thinking in those terms, not "because he abandoned phenomenology but because he continued to practice phenomenological seeing and demonstration exclusively." Heidegger still defends phenomenological seeing in his last Seminar in Zähringen (1973), *Vier Seminare* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), pp. 110ff.



## § 3. Ontology and Metontology

It was noted above that between 1926 and 1929 Heidegger came increasingly to view his project in Kantian terms. In particular, in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929, based on a lecture course from WS 1927/28), Heidegger tied Kant's transcendental project (and so also his own) to the distinction between *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*. The former indicates transcendental inquiry into the grounds of ontological knowledge, while the latter is the system of such knowledge, viz., rational psychology, cosmology, and theology. In contrast to the previously cited statement from *Being and Time*, according to which phenomenological ontology does not need to "measure up to the tasks of some discipline that has been presented beforehand," Heidegger's eagerness to see his project as a "retrieval"[18] of Kant's now exerts a pressure toward "system" on that very project. For instance, according to Kant's Transcendental Dialectic, *metaphysica specialis* proves to rest on a "transcendental illusion" (*Schein*) and cannot yield any genuine theoretical knowledge.[19] Because Heidegger views *Being and Time* as carrying out Kant's Copernican turn at the deeper level of "Dasein's finitude"[20] and thus as roughly congruent with the task of *metaphysica generalis*, he *must* take a stand on the Dialectic's negative judgment on the possibility of *metaphysica specialis*.

The conclusion of the Kant-book hints at such a stand. Having identified *Being and Time* with a retrieval of the problematic of the Transcendental Analytic, Heidegger asks whether, "by extension," he should not also be able to retrieve "a positive problematic" in the apparently purely negative "characteristic of the Transcendental Dialectic." In a series of elliptical remarks he suggests that what Kant identified as "transcendental appearance [*Schein*]" or illusion needs to be rethought in light of *Being and Time*'s theory of truth, such that the "infinitude" presupposed in raising the question of Dasein's finitude can itself be brought into focus.[21] Thus, while sharing Kant's strictures against dogmatic metaphysics (he does not deny that transcendental appearance is an *illusion*, for example, calling it "transcendental untruth"), Heidegger nevertheless demands a *reassessment* of the Dialectic.

18 See Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1951), p. 199; *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, tr. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 154.

19 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 297–300 (A293/B349-A298/B355). I leave out of account here Kant's arguments for a kind of *metaphysica specialis* based on practical reason, though it is perhaps not without relevance for the problem at hand. For valuable suggestions (though with little analysis of metontology), see Frank Schalow, *The Retrieval of the Kant-Heidegger Dialogue* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). Most recently there is Sarah Lilly Heidt, *From Transcendence to the Open: Freedom and Finitude in the Thought of Martin Heidegger* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1997).

20 Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, pp. 208ff; English translation, pp. 162ff.

21 Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, p. 221; English translation, p. 172.

one that entertains the possibility of *some* sort of *metaphysica specialis*, some legitimate form of metaphysical inquiry. Heidegger's turn to the language of metaphysics for help in completing the project of *Being and Time* seems intended to occupy the terrain opened up by his reassessment of the Transcendental Dialectic. For having liberated this metaphysical problematic from "that architectonic into which Kant forced it," it becomes possible for Heidegger to imagine that reflection on "infinitude" might stand in a hermeneutical relationship to the analysis of Dasein's finitude from which it sprang, thus providing a "metaphysical" ground for ontology. And just here we encounter the puzzling idea of metontology.

When Heidegger introduces metontology a further connection with Kant's Transcendental Dialectic becomes explicit. He distinguishes broadly between *Being and Time*'s ontological inquiry (*metaphysica generalis*) and another sort of inquiry, a "new investigation" that "resides in the essence of ontology itself and is the result of its overturning [*Umschlag*], its μεταβολή" namely, "metontology," a "special problematic which has for its proper theme beings as a whole [*das Seiende im Ganzen*]" (GA26:199; MFL 157). Kant's Transcendental Dialectic is concerned precisely with inquiry into beings as a whole—that is, with reason's claim to be able to grasp the "totality" of a series of conditions for every conditioned.[22] But where Kant judges metaphysics cognitively wanting in this pretense, Heidegger, thanks to his reassessment of the Dialectic, seems to believe that an inquiry which "makes beings thematic in their totality in light of ontology" (GA26:200; MFL 157)—hence an inquiry with the *scope* of *metaphysica specialis*—is possible after all. Significantly, metontology cannot simply be equated with the immanent turn called for in *Being and Time*, since that turn was intended not as an overturning (*Umschlag*) of ontology but as a move, *within* ontology, from Dasein's understanding of being to the meaning of being itself. Even though it is to be developed "in light of ontology" (i.e., phenomenology), metontology must be a new *kind* of inquiry. As David Wood has argued, the idea of an inquiry into beings as a whole can arise only because "Heidegger thinks through again the idea of fundamental ontology."[23] Because this rethinking exploits an inconsistency in *Being and Time*, however, Heidegger's attempt to rescue metaphysics from Kant's Transcendental Dialectic fails—or so I shall argue.

One clue to how metontology is supposed to relate to ontology is found in Heidegger's 1928 characterization of the project of *Being and Time*: Because it aimed solely at elucidating Dasein's "understanding of being," the "analysis of the existence of Dasein" was neither an "anthropology nor an

[22] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 318 (A326/B383).

[23] David Wood, "Reiterating the Temporal: Toward a Rethinking of Heidegger on Time," in *Rereading Heidegger*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 139.



ethics." It focused instead upon Dasein "prior to every factual concretion," thus with a "peculiar neutrality" regarding a whole host of questions that, Heidegger now suggests, would fall within the scope of a "metaphysics of Dasein"—questions, for example, of sex and gender, embodiment, historical particularization, socio-cultural dispersal, and entanglement in "what we call 'nature' in the broadest sense" (GA26:171–74; MFL 136–38). This suggests that the "metaphysics of Dasein" would be a chapter within metontology as an inquiry into beings as a whole—a return to *homo humanus* that appears very much like the philosophical anthropology with which *Being and Time* is still too often confused.[24] However, this return is complicated by the fact that Heidegger, turning to the "language of metaphysics" for help, has significantly transformed the question he is asking.

During his Aristotelian-Husserlian phenomenological decade, Heidegger held the basic question of philosophy to be ontological: What is the *meaning* of being? Against this, Max Scheler objected that philosophy begins with the "absolute wonder" that "there is anything at all and not nothing," and this Leibnizian question—Why is there something rather than nothing?—comes to dominate Heidegger's metaphysical decade.[25] Yet it stands in a certain tension with the central argument of *Being and Time*.[26] For instance, if the question asks after a reason or ground "for" beings as a whole, in *Being and Time* this ground can only be understood transcendentally: being, "that which determines entities as entities," is that "on the basis of which entities are already *understood*"; further, this "being of entities is not itself an entity," i.e., not a ground in the ontic sense, an *ens realissimum* or totality of entities of any kind (SZ 6; BT 25–26). The completion of *Being and Time* was to involve a turn from Dasein's understanding of being to the meaning of being—and so was to remain within the scope of a ground of meaning. But Heidegger's new question appears suspiciously like the search for an ontic "explanation" for beings as a whole, one which threatens to annul his genuine insight into the difference between being (meaning) and beings. The question of why there is something rather than nothing thus forces a confrontation between a transcendental (ontological or phenomenological) and a

[24] Krell, *Intimations of Mortality*, p. 28.

[25] Cf. Otto Pöggeler, "Ausgleich und andere Anfang: Scheler und Heidegger," *Studien zur Philosophie von Max Scheler*, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth und Gerhard Pfafferott (München: Karl Alber, 1993), p. 178.

[26] John Sallis, *Echoes. After Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 154, for example, notes that the 1935 lecture, which became *Einführung in die Metaphysik* and which starts from this Leibnizian question, tries to "retrace the way from the question of metontology back to the question of fundamental ontology." The tension between the two questions is also explored in William McNeill's essay, "Metaphysics, Fundamental Ontology, Metontology 1925-1935," *Heidegger Studies*, Vol. 8 (1992), pp. 63–80. In what follows I show that this tension results from an equivocation on the meaning of "ground."

metaphysical concept of grounding, and "metontology" names the confusion of the two.

The whole problem is that it is not at all clear what status an *inquiry* into beings as a whole could have within the framework of *Being and Time*. The care with which that text handles the question of bringing Dasein into view "as a whole"[27] might lead us to expect an equally gingerly approach to questions of metaphysical totalities. After all, Kant did not deny that we somehow *think* of ourselves as belonging within what is as a whole; indeed, he analyzed various experiences (e.g., the sublime) in which that sense overcomes us. He denied only that we could rationally inquire into the "whole of what is." So if Heidegger is to give a positive sense to the idea of metaphysical inquiry he owes an account, consistent with *Being and Time*, of how metaphysical totalities can be comprehended sufficiently to be inquired into.[28] Some natural candidates for such an account present themselves; none, however, can stand up to scrutiny.

First, the idea of an inquiry into *das Seiende im Ganzen* as the ontic context for a metaphysics of Dasein clearly tracks Heidegger's current interest in something like philosophical *cosmology*, stimulated by Max Scheler's work. As Pöggeler argues, "it was through impulses from Scheler's question concerning man's place in the cosmos that Heidegger was led to recontextualize his fundamental ontology in a metontology or metaphysical ontic."[29] But if Heidegger shared with Scheler the desire to "risk again the step into authentic metaphysics," he judged the latter's own attempt a failure—not "authentic" metaphysical inquiry but mere *Weltanschauung*—precisely because it did not address the "central question of general ontology" (GA26:165; MFL 132). Having confronted that question head-on in *Being and Time*, does Heidegger's metontology avoid Scheler's fate? Does he describe a plausible notion of cosmological inquiry?

27 See SZ 233; BT 276, but the first three chapters of Division II are devoted to this question.

28 In the 1929 essay "Was ist Metaphysik?" (*Wegmarken*, p. 109; "What is Metaphysics?" *Basic Writings*, p. 99) Heidegger insists on "an essential distinction" between "comprehending the whole of beings as such [*des Ganzen des Seienden an sich*] and finding oneself in the midst of beings as a whole [*des Seienden im Ganzen*]. The former," he continues, "is impossible in principle." This leaves the question of what *inquiry* into the latter might be. What Heidegger in this essay calls "metaphysical inquiry" is really still only ontological in the sense of *Being and Time* and provides no evidence for what metontology might be.

29 Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers logische Untersuchungen," *Martin Heidegger: Innen- und Außenansichten*, ed. Siegfried Blasche, et al. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989), pp. 92–93. Pöggeler further takes the term "metontology" to echo Scheler's proposal for a "metanthropology"—an inquiry "concerned with metaphysical perspectives in the various sciences." Otto Pöggeler, "Heidegger on Art," *Martin Heidegger: Politics, Art, and Technology*, ed. Karsten Harries and Christoph Jamme (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1994), p. 116. Others, however—e.g., Krell, *Intimations*, pp. 38–39, and Hosokawa, "Heidegger und die Ethik," p. 251—link the term with the idea of a "sudden transition" (μεταβολή, *Umschlag*) of ontology.



A second candidate is suggested when one notes that the very language Heidegger uses to describe metontology—that it cultivates a "metaphysical ontic" by way of "existentiell questioning" (GA26:200, 199; MFL 158, 157)—poses a puzzle from the perspective of *Being and Time*, since there these terms ("ontic," "existentiell") refer to a pre-transcendental concern with entities from empirically particular points of view.[30] Might it be, then, that Heidegger's cosmology is prepared to make the naturalizing move that has become familiar in late twentieth-century philosophy? His remoteness from all that becomes obvious, however, when he contrasts his proposal with the then-popular "inductive metaphysics" of Oswald Külpe, a position Heidegger had criticized already in 1912. Külpe held that the goal of philosophy, metaphysics, could be achieved by projecting the findings of the sciences of nature (physics and psychology) to the point where they intersected and formed a unified picture of the world. In 1912 Heidegger objected that the "hypothetical" basis of such naturalism contradicted the very idea of philosophy.[31] In 1928 he reiterates that even though metontology is like empirical science in having "beings for its subject matter," it "is not a summary ontic in the sense of a general science that empirically assembles the results of the individual sciences into a so-called 'world-picture,' so as to deduce from it a world-view and guide for life" (GA26:199–200; MFL 157). Heidegger thus implies that metontology does not aim to naturalize what *Being and Time* calls *veritas transcendentalis*, transcendental truth.

Indeed, metontology is to "make beings thematic in their totality in light of ontology" (GA26:200; MFL 157)—i.e., in light of the transcendentally disclosed meaning of being. Should we see it then as supplying the complete "system of categories" hinted at in *Being and Time*, the regional "ontologies themselves which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundations" (SZ 11; BT 31)? This third candidate would be consistent with the transcendental standpoint of *Being and Time* and could, without much semantic strain, be labeled a "metaphysical ontic," since it would concern the apriori constitution of the object-domains or ontic regions cultivated in anthropology, psychology, biology, history, and the like. Two considerations—one structural and one substantive—tell against identifying metontology with regional-ontological inquiry, however. First, considered structurally Heidegger's conception of fundamental ontology already contains a place for regional ontologies, and that is not the place of metontology. Fundamental ontology consists of three phases (GA26:196; MFL 154). The first is a

30 Compare Krell, *Intimations of Mortality*, p. 41.

31 Martin Heidegger, "Das Realitätsproblem in der modernen Philosophie," *Frühe Schriften*, p. 15. This criticism should not blind one to the fact that Heidegger's own position in 1912 is very much like that of Külpe's so-called "critical realism," with all its attendant ambiguities, and that it is not until his metaphysical decade that Heidegger comes to terms with this aspect of his thinking.

"grounding that establishes the intrinsic possibility of the being question as the basic problem of metaphysics—the interpretation of Dasein as temporality" carried out in *Being and Time*. Second, there is "an explication of the basic problems contained in the question of being—the temporal exposition of the problem of being," a task sketched in what Heidegger called a "new elaboration of division 3 of part 1 of *Being and Time*."[32] Here, in addition to the move from Dasein's temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) to the temporality (*Temporalität*) of being, we find the elaboration of four "basic problems contained in the question of being."[33] One of these problems is "clarification of the existence mode of things and their regional constitution." Here is the place for regional ontologies of "history and artworks," of "nature" and its "diverse modes: space, number, life, human existence itself," and so on (GA26:191f; MFL 151), but it is not metontology, i.e., not what Heidegger means by a *metaphysical* inquiry. The latter is reached only with the third phase of fundamental ontology—"the development of the self-understanding of the problematic, its task and limits—the overturning [*Umschlag*]" (GA26:196; MFL 154).

The second, substantive, reason why metontology cannot be identified with regional-ontological (categorial) inquiry within the framework of *Being and Time* follows from the last remark. For categorial inquiry into the "unity of the *idea* of being and its regional variants" (GA26:191; MFL 151) still operates with the phenomenological concept of grounds of meaning. Metontology, on the other hand, is not to be grounded *in* Dasein's understanding (or the "idea" of being) but is to provide grounds *for* Dasein. The "language of metaphysics" thus invokes a second, as yet unclarified, sense of "ground" whereby the phenomenology of *Being and Time* is itself to be grounded in that "metaphysical ontic in which it implicitly always remains" (GA26: 201; MFL 158). The inconsistency in *Being and Time* emerges with this idea of a double grounding.

## §4. The Problem of Double Grounding

What exactly is meant by "double grounding," and why is it a problem? These questions are best answered by considering a passage where Heidegger explains why there is supposed to be an "intrinsic *necessity*" that ontology "turn back" to its ontic point of origin. Heidegger writes:

> The being 'man' understands being; understanding of being effects a distinction between being and beings; being is there only when Dasein understands being. In other words, the possibility that being is there in the understanding presupposes the factical existence of Dasein, and this in turn presupposes the factical extantness of nature (GA26:199; MFL 156).

The first sentence in this passage merely restates the thesis of *Being and Time* that the transcendental ground of ontological knowledge lies in Dasein's understanding of being. Problems begin in the next sentence: how are we to read the first occurrence of "presupposes"? If it means no more than that there is no thinking without a thinker, it is trivial. By introducing it with "in other words," however, Heidegger signals that it too must be read in light of *Being and Time*, where the term "factical existence" does not refer to the "fact" of whether a being of such-and-such constitution is currently found among the furniture of the universe, but to the *constitution* of that being itself.[34] "Factical existence" is shorthand for the full ontological character of Dasein, the "facticity" and "existentiality" that together account phenomenologically for Dasein's understanding of being (SZ 191; BT 235). Read this way, the first occurrence of "presupposes" is non-trivial because it adumbrates the transcendental ground. It is the *second* occurrence of "presupposes" in this sentence, however, that signifies the supposed necessity of a passage from ontology to metontology, and here Heidegger seems to rely on the *trivial* sense when he claims that "the factical existence of Dasein...in turn presupposes the factical extantness [*faktische Vorhandensein*] of nature." Ontology thus finds a second ground in the "factical extantness of nature"—it is possible "only if a possible totality of beings is already there" (GA26:199; MFL 157). Metontology is to inquire into *this* sort of dependency.

There is, then, an equivocation on the notion of "presupposition" in this passage. The claim that "the possibility that being is there in the understanding" presupposes "the factical existence of Dasein" refers to a transcendental-phenomenological sense of ground concerned with conditions of intelligibility, while the claim that "the factical existence of Dasein" presupposes "the factical extantness of nature" refers to an entirely different sense of ground—an ontic sense—whose relation to the first is by no means clear. By itself, the existence of this equivocation is not a problem; it becomes one only if the relations between the two senses of "ground" are not identified and respected. In *Being and Time* the equivocation is present but is contained by Heidegger's Husserlian procedure of bracketing all question of ontic grounds, and overt inconsistency is avoided. It breaks out only when Heidegger tries to remove the brackets with help from the language of metaphysics.

That the problem of double grounding lurks in *Being and Time* is not hard to show. When Heidegger claims that "readiness-to-hand is the way in which

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[32] That is, in the lecture course of SS 1927, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe Bd. 24, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), p. 1; *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, tr. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 1.

[33] These four problems are discussed again, in somewhat different terms, at GA26:191–95; MFL 151–53.

[34] Heidegger makes a similar phenomenological point later in the text: "If I say of Dasein that its basic constitution is being-in-the-world, I am then first of all asserting something that belongs to its essence, and I thereby disregard whether the being of such a nature factually exists or not" (GA26:217; MFL 169).

entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorially" (i.e., phenomenologically), for example, he immediately notes that "only by reason of something extant [*auf dem Grunde von Vorhandenem*] 'is there' anything ready to hand." Hence the extant is presupposed. Nevertheless, it does not follow that "readiness-to-hand is ontologically founded on extantness" (SZ 71; BT 101), and an ontological ground must therefore be other than whatever sort of ground belongs to the presupposition of the extant. Such examples could be multiplied, but they all yield the same distinction: ontological grounding concerns the *priority of meaning*, that which enables understanding, and in that sense we are able to grasp the extant only "through" the ready to hand, or better, through the "world" as the meaning-horizon of entities within the world. "Only on the basis of the phenomenon of the world can the being-in-itself of entities within-the-world be grasped ontologically" (SZ 76; BT 106).[35] To claim that "only by reason of something extant 'is there' anything ready to hand," however, is to invoke another sort of priority, one that does not concern relations of meaning but relations between those entities—of which "man" is one—that show up in the world via Dasein's understanding.[36] Hence the question raised at the end of *Being and Time*: Can ontology be ontologically grounded, or does it also require an ontic ground?

What Heidegger says of Kant expresses the paradox of his own position: "Ontology is grounded in the ontic, and yet the transcendental problem is developed out of what is thus grounded, and the transcendental also first clarifies the function of the ontic" (GA26:210; MFL 164). Has *Being and Time* clarified the function of the ontic such that it becomes possible to inquire into an ontic ground of ontology? Heidegger has all along insisted, against subjective or empirical idealism, that entities are not reducible to Dasein's understanding of being; they have a certain "independence."[37] In asking after an ontic ground of ontology he seems to want to make this independence thematic in such a way that the phenomenological project can be clarified, grounded, in terms of it. But can ontology really be said to presuppose nature in any non-trivial sense? Heidegger certainly cannot intend to

[35] Similar remarks are frequent in Heidegger's texts of the period; compare, e.g., GA26:194–5; MFL 153; *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 297 (GA24:421–22).

[36] Compare GA26:186; MFL 147: "Being is prior neither ontically nor logically, but prior in a primordial sense that precedes both. It is prior to each in a different way; neither ontically nor logically prior but ontologically." I interpret this to refer to the transcendental-phenomenological priority of meaning (the topic of *Being and Time*) over all empirical, formal, and *metaphysical* modes of knowledge or "encounter" of beings. And, as Heidegger elsewhere suggests, this ontological ground "implies nothing about...the ontical relations between beings, between nature and Dasein..." (*Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 295; GA24:419).

[37] See, for example, BT 255, 272; SZ 212, 230; *Basic Problems*, pp. 169, 175, 219; GA26:194; MFL 251.



offer empirical-causal explanations for what was presented in the transcendental account, a story about how the natural entity, man, evolved and how its understanding of being can be explained in terms of natural laws—perhaps as an adaptation of neurological, psychological, or socio-cultural factors. Such inquiries can be carried out, but to see them as grounds of ontological knowledge relativizes the latter in a way that Heidegger shows no interest in doing: "being cannot be explained through entities" (BT 251; SZ 207). Yet a metaphysical appeal to entities, such as metontology is said to be, is no less objectionable. To see why, it will be useful to glance briefly at how Husserl negotiated the same impasse Heidegger reaches at the end of *Being and Time*, avoiding the inconsistency that undermines Heidegger's thinking.

As is well known, Husserl's breakthrough to phenomenology in the *Logical Investigations* came with the idea that no non-circular explanation of knowledge as a factual occurrence is possible, hence that philosophical grounding of knowledge can only strive to clarify the *meaning* of cognition by reflection on cognitive intentional experiences (*Erlebnisse*). However, the *Logical Investigations* was still caught in a double-bind: on the one hand, while the structure of the *Erlebnisse* could be adequately grasped in direct reflection, that appeared merely to be psychological immanence, shut off from the physical world. Phenomenology thus seemed to yield a kind of skepticism. On the other hand, to speak of the "psychological" presupposes reference to the supposedly unavailable real world after all, thus rendering the phenomenological delimitation of its sphere of evidence dogmatic.[38] Husserl's escape from this naturalistic double-bind came through his theory of the phenomenological reduction.

The reduction interests us here solely in relation to the idea of phenomenological grounding, and the main point to note is that through it the field of phenomenological evidence explored in the *Logical Investigations* is freed of those presuppositions that identify it, prior to philosophical criticism, with a particular region of being, a particular slice of the world. This it does first by "bracketing" all scientific theories (including metaphysical theories) that seek to explain what is given to reflection, and together with these, all interpretations of the given which depend on what Husserl calls "transcendent" assumptions—for instance, the assumption of an ontological distinction between the mental and the physical. This move yields a specifically *transcendental* idealism, distinguished from empirical or psychological idealism in that the latter, but not the former, makes first-order claims about the nature of objects (e.g., that they are really "mental" constructs). What Henry Allison says of Kant's position holds equally of Husserl's, viz., that "transcendental idealism must be characterized primarily as a metaphilo-

[38] Cf. Theodore DeBoer, *The Development of Husserl's Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978).

sophical or methodological 'standpoint.' rather than as a straightforwardly metaphysical doctrine about the nature or ontological status of the objects of human cognition."[39] What distinguishes Kant's from Husserl's transcendental idealism is that the former considers objects in light of what Allison calls "epistemic conditions," i.e., conditions "necessary for the representation of an object or an objective state of affairs."[40] while the latter casts a wider net, reflecting upon grounds of intelligibility or meaning *per se*—thus upon the entire sphere of "intentionality" or conscious life in its meaningful connections. Because these grounds concern conditions that make entities intelligible, there is no sense in which they could in turn be relativized (reduced) to one or another region of entities.

Put otherwise, the relativity of meaning to transcendental subjectivity is not a case of causal dependence, an epistemological species-relativism, or a metaphysical claim about a peculiar "absolute" entity. These are versions of *subjectivism* which transcendental idealism, as a metaphilosophical standpoint achieved through the reduction, leaves behind. Whether one denies the predicate "being" to this transcendental subject, as Husserl does, or exploits this standpoint as a way of raising the whole question of the meaning of being in a new way, as does Heidegger, the real danger lies in misconstruing these transcendental relations as ontic ones, thereby succumbing to what Husserl calls "transcendental realism." Transcendental realism is the "absurd position" into which one falls if one mistakes the sphere of transcendental subjectivity for a "tag end of the world," i.e., an entity itself defined by the worldly nexus which is its phenomenologically disclosed correlate.[41] By bracketing the validity claims of worldly being, the reduction yields a kind of phenomenological evidence whose significance is prior to the mesh of the world. There is no sense, then, in which such evidence presupposes the factical extantness of nature.

Now Husserl, no less than Heidegger, saw that the transcendental ground is reached by reflecting upon the "natural attitude"—on what Husserl calls psychological subjectivity or what Heidegger calls average everydayness. Thus both recognized that their starting point was entangled in the world, yet both sought a distinct perspective on that entanglement (a phenomenological ground) from which the meaning of that entanglement could be clarified. It is true that Husserl appears more rationalistic in his belief that the natural attitude can be thoroughly clarified, while Heidegger doubts that the conditions of meaning can be made fully transparent.[42] However, these are inter-phenomenological disputes about the reach of phenomenological evidence (or grounding) itself, whereas the real danger—one that neither Husserl nor Heidegger can altogether resist—lies in the pull of traditional, non-phenomenological problems.[43] Ultimately, it is something like the phenomenological reduction from entities to meaning that enables Heidegger to thematize the ontological difference between being and beings, while the impasse he reaches at the end of *Being and Time* arises from a confusion about its implications for *Existenz*, Dasein's mode of being. For example, "world" in *Being and Time* is a structural feature of Dasein's being, i.e., a transcendental condition of intelligibility and thus the meaning-ground of what shows up within the world. "Nature," in contrast, is "an entity within the world" (BT 254; SZ 211) and thus "can never make *worldhood* intelligible" (SZ 65; BT 94). To suggest that Dasein's understanding of being presupposes the factical extantness of nature thus implies a shift toward a transcendental realistic perspective which is not just supplemental to, but *inconsistent* with, the phenomenological project. Empirical inquiries into "man's" entanglement in nature are certainly possible, but only on the ground of Dasein's understanding of being. Even the mere *possibility* of a metaphysical reading of this entanglement that could avoid the objection of transcendental realism, however, has yet to be shown.[44]

## §5. The End of Being and Time and the Overcoming of Metaphysics

If transcendental realism is the error of treating being-in-the-world as just another worldly entity, we have already encountered Heidegger's closest brush

39 Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 25.

40 Ibid., p. 10.

41 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, tr. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 24.

42 This difference is nicely elaborated by Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

43 In Husserl's case this is especially apparent in his collaboration with Eugen Fink on the so-called "Sixth Cartesian Meditation," in which traditional metaphysical issues come to the fore, largely, I believe, thanks to Fink's Hegelian way of formulating phenomenological problems. See Eugen Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, tr. with an introduction by Ronald Bruzina (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

44 One will object that this reading cannot be right since it imputes to Heidegger an acceptance of the phenomenological reduction (in at least some of its aspects), when he must surely reject it. What is Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, after all, if not a rejection of Husserl's reduction of the world to transcendental subjectivity? And doesn't he specifically repudiate the reduction in the lecture course from WS 1925, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, tr. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 109? As I have argued elsewhere, the problem is a good deal more complicated than any simple acceptance or rejection: *Being and Time* is finally inconsistent on the issue. Since there is no room to repeat the arguments here, I refer to my "Ontology and Transcendental Phenomenology Between Husserl and Heidegger," *Husserl in Contemporary Context*, ed. Burt Hopkins (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), pp. 13–36, and "Husserl, Heidegger, and Transcendental Philosophy: Another Look at the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Article," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. L, no. 3 (1990), pp. 501–18.

with it, viz., in his suggestion that the transcendental "neutrality" of the analysis of Dasein be supplemented by a "metaphysics of Dasein." There, the categorial features of Dasein that in *Being and Time* were defined exclusively with reference to the transcendental project of grounding ontological knowledge are to be reinterpreted in terms of the "factical extantness of nature."[45] Heidegger certainly felt that this metontology would provide a distinctively philosophical ground, for it was to be neither an empirical inquiry nor a development of transcendental philosophy's implicit regional ontologies. Recalling our earlier discussion of Kant's Transcendental Dialectic, Heidegger seems to have hoped that metontology would restore philosophical cosmology and provide a metaphysical ground for the phenomenological project of *Being and Time*. Yet it is hard to avoid the suspicion that cosmology of this sort is rather less inquiry than construction of what Heidegger himself describes as worldview—an "all-inclusive reflection on the world and the human Dasein," one that is "existentiell," i.e., "determined by environment—people, race, class, developmental stage of culture"; not so much "a matter of theoretical knowledge" as "a coherent conviction which determines the current affairs of life more or less expressly and directly," an outlook that "always arises out of the particular factical existence of the human being."[46] Now Heidegger's relation to the worldview question is complex,[47] but given his critique of Scheler we know that he envisioned something more for metontology; indeed, it must be something more since "philosophy itself never gives a world-view, nor does it have the task of providing one" (GA26:230; MFL 179). If we ask what the relevant distinction between philosophy and worldview is, the preceding discussion suggests that where philosophy inquires into grounds or reasons, worldviews presuppose such grounds and build upon them. Cosmology, then, seems to get us no further than worldview; but perhaps the genuine metaphysical ground is to be found only by moving through cosmology to retrieve rational *theology* from Kant's Dialectic.

This would certainly provide an answer to Heidegger's question, at the end of *Being and Time*, concerning *what* entity was to function as the ontic ground of ontology. If the factical existence of Dasein presupposes the factical extantness of nature (beings as a whole), metontology might be seen as providing the metaphysical-ontic ground for ontology by referring this

45 David Wood, "Reiterating the Temporal," p. 141, correctly notes that what Heidegger proposes here is something like "the unity of a differentiated set that he has already analyzed transcendentally," a take on Dasein that "cannot, however, be ontic [sc. empirical], nor can it be transcendental." He then expresses well-founded worries that in so doing Heidegger threatens to "dispense with certain constitutive rules of intelligibility."

46 Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, pp. 5–6 (GA24:7–8).

47 A sensitive treatment is found in Robert Bernasconi, "'The Double Concept of Philosophy' and the Place of Ethics in *Being and Time*," in *Heidegger in Question* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993).





cosmological whole to its ground in God. Many things speak in favor of such a suggestion. For instance, Heidegger links metontology with *metaphysica specialis*, i.e., with "metaphysics as final purpose," and this, in turn, is identified with that part of πρώτη φιλοσοφία Aristotle called Θεολογία (GA26:229; MFL 178). From this angle, Heidegger's metaphysics is essentially a retrieval of Aristotle's: *Being and Time* focuses upon ontology, an inquiry into being *qua* being (τὸ ὄν ἡ ὄν), while metontology takes up theology or the "problem of transcendence," an inquiry into "the highest kind of being" (τὸ τιμιώτατον γένος εἶναι), τὸ Θεῖον.[48] A "metaphysical" ground would thus be a theological one, and the relation between phenomenology and metaphysics would be the relation between transcendental philosophy and theology.

Even if this suggestion is right, however, it is hard to see how it avoids the charge of transcendental realism: Appeal to God could no more consistently serve as an account of Dasein's understanding of being (ontology), independent of that very understanding, than could cosmological appeal to the contexts of nature or history. Heidegger's earlier point still holds: "being cannot be explained through entities."[49] But in fact the suggestion does not really get us beyond cosmology at all, since Heidegger's reading of theology is essentially cosmological: τὸ Θεῖον signifies "simply beings—the heavens: the encompassing and overpowering, that under and upon which we are thrown, that which dazzles us and takes us by surprise, the overwhelming" (GA26:13; MFL 11).[50] Heidegger does link this "understanding of being qua superior power [*Übermächtig*]" with "holiness" (GA26:211; MFL 165), and Pöggeler is surely right to say that Scheler's way of asking the why-question has "stimulated Heidegger to reopen the question of the divine [*Göttlichen*] in terms of which human beings have understood themselves," thus taking up again the thread of his theological beginnings.[51] Nevertheless, Heidegger is not identifying the ontic ground of ontology with God. Almost as if he had the objection of transcendental realism in mind, he explicitly states that in discussing being as the overpowering the "dialectical illusion is especially great" and that it is therefore "preferable to put up with the cheap accusation of atheism which, *if it is intended ontically*, is in fact completely correct" (GA26:211; MFL 165, my emphasis). The "being that must take over the function of providing" an ontic ground, invoked at the end of *Being and Time*, cannot be God.

48 For full elaboration of this suggestion see Hosokawa, "The Conception of *Being and Time* and the Problem of Metaphysics," and "Heidegger und die Ethik," *passim*.

49 This does not, of course, rule out an ontological theology; it only rules out taking such theology as ground *of* ontology.

50 This view of Aristotle's "theology" predates Heidegger's metaphysical decade. It is present as early as the lecture course of WS 1924/25, *Platon: Sophistes*, Gesamtausgabe Bd. 19, ed. Ingeborg Schüßler (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), p. 222.

51 Pöggeler, "Heideggers logische Untersuchungen," p. 93.

There is, then, apparently nothing left but to see the ontic ground as Dasein itself—not insofar as it understands being, but insofar as it finds itself already in the midst of a totality of beings "under and upon which we are *thrown*."[52] Heidegger claims that the two sides of Aristotle's first philosophy—"knowledge of beings and knowledge of the overwhelming"—correspond "to the twofold in *Being and Time* of existence and thrownness" (GA26:13; MFL 11). Having concentrated on a phenomenological clarification of Dasein's understanding of being—so the argument goes[53]—*Being and Time* concludes by acknowledging that the "projection" or interpretation of existence upon which such phenomenology draws is itself compromised by ontic presuppositions due to the inquirer's "thrownness" or facticity, i.e., her being always already particularly situated in the midst of beings as a whole. Since, as Heidegger reminds us, *Being and Time* employs a "factical ideal of Dasein," an "ontical way of taking existence which...need not be binding for everyone," the "ontological 'truth' of the existential analysis is developed on the ground of the primordial existentiell truth."[54] It is plausible, then, to think that metontology turns back to investigate this primordial existentiell truth in some way, as the ontic "ground" of the ontological project.

The value of this suggestion does not lie in any precise insight it gives into what metontological or metaphysical inquiry could be; it adds—and *can* add—nothing to what we have already considered. Indeed, though this appears to be the interpretation of these matters favored by most commentators, I mention it only at this late stage because anyone adopting it must already have conceded that there can be no purely metaphysical grounds distinct from phenomenological ones, hence that there can be no metaphysical (metontological) inquiry into them. It is impossible that metontology could *investigate* thrownness—in the sense of demonstrating the natural, social, or historical limits of Dasein's understanding of being—since such investigation would already be grounded in that very understanding. Further, *Being and Time* has already analyzed the finitude of Dasein's understanding, and our access to it, by appeal to the existential categories of disposition (*Befindlichkeit*) and mood (*Stimmung*). If the "primary discovery of the world" is by way of "bare mood," we do not have the basis for an inquiry, but precisely the reverse: "the 'whence' and the 'whither'" of our being in the midst of what is "remain in darkness" (BT 177, 173; SZ 138, 134). What more can metontology hope to do but reaffirm this? And when Heidegger

[52] It is tempting to link this suggestion with a retrieval of rational *psychology* from Kant's Dialectic.

[53] Versions of this view can be found in Hosokawa, "Heidegger und die Ethik"; Krell, *Intimations*; Sallis, *Echoes*; McNeill, "Metaphysics, Fundamental Ontology", and Grondin, "Prolegomena"; among others.

[54] BT 358, 360, 364; SZ 310, 312, 316.





revisits these issues at the start of his metaphysical decade—in the 1929 "What is Metaphysics?"—nothing has changed: the distinctive mood of *Angst* is said to reveal the nothing (*das Nichts*), that is, to bring us before the phenomenological fact that reasons—ontic answers to the question of why there is something rather than nothing—*give out*.[55] Yet the fact that metaphysics or metontology represents, on this reading, less an inquiry than the impossibility of one is, for those who adopt it, just the point: the ontic ground of ontology is understood precisely as something the recognition of which *undermines* the project of ontology, signaling the end, the collapse, of *Being and Time*.

Thus Jean Grondin thinks that "Dasein proves to be too finite and too historically situated to enable it to derive...transcendental structures of its most fundamental being," while John Sallis holds that appeal to the "overwhelming" in the midst of which we find ourselves leads to "the sacrifice of the understanding."[56] More modestly, Robert Bernasconi concludes not that Dasein's finitude, its ontic situatedness, precludes it from grasping transcendental (ontological) structures, but that "Heidegger is not readily able to sustain the *purity* of the distinction between the ontic and the ontological."[57] This, however, does not imply that no such distinction is to be made, or that such "impurity" requires "sacrifice of the understanding." Similarly, David Wood recognizes that "it may be vital to shift from ontic discourse, discourse about beings and their relation to each other, to discourse about being," but we nevertheless cannot ignore "back-door entanglements between the ontic and the ontological"; indeed, "the transcendental...is nowhere else but *in* the empirical."[58] But if *that* is what the collapse of *Being and Time* amounts to, I would take it as good evidence for my earlier claim that what "failed" was not phenomenology ("phenomenological seeing"), but the "inappropriate concern with 'science' and 'research'." For what must be abandoned in the face of ontic-ontological entanglement is the *esprit de système*—far more evident in Heidegger's appropriation of phenomenology than it is in Husserl's original[59]—that demands a successor-discipline to traditional metaphysics. The hermeneutic phenomenology of *Being and Time* is already

[55] For this reason, as we saw above, Heidegger distinguishes here between "comprehending the whole of beings"—which he sees as impossible for a finite being—and "finding oneself in the midst of beings as a whole"—which is accomplished all the time through mood. The question of whether the phenomenon of mood can serve as the basis for metaphysical *inquiry* is explored in the lecture course from WS 1929/30, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit*, Gesamtausgabe Bd. 29/30, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983). In my view it does not get beyond the impasse of 1928, but the issue is too complex to treat here.

[56] Grondin, "Prolegomena," p. 69; Sallis, *Echoes*, pp. 145, 148.

[57] Bernasconi, "'The Double Concept of Philosophy'," p. 33.

[58] Wood, "Reiterating the Temporal," pp. 156–57.

[59] I mean by this perhaps contentious-sounding statement only that the "architectonic" drive is more clearly present in *Being and Time* than in anything Husserl ever published.

nothing but the continual attempt to negotiate this impurity, seeking the transcendental *in* the empirical. If philosophy can never constitute itself as absolute, infallible, secured, unrevisable—a fixed system of permanent possessions—the search for something like transcendental conditions of meaning is nevertheless inseparable from the project of philosophizing, a necessary "illusion" (GA26:201; MFL 158), as Heidegger comes to call it.

Why "illusion"? Perhaps because although we acknowledge our finitude (the fallible, impure character of ontological inquiry), after we arrive phenomenologically at what we understand to be necessary, apriori (transcendental) truths, the claim that our insight has arisen from our limited abilities as thinkers "is no more exciting"—as J. L. Austin once put it[60]—"than adding 'D.V.'" At a deeper level, though, reference to a necessary illusion points to the confluence of ethical and epistemological motives in the notion of philosophical grounding. The phenomenological project, as a philosophical *practice*, proves to be an "art of existing" (GA26:210; MFL 158), and it is no accident that this art—the ontic ideal informing the analysis of existence in *Being and Time*—exhibits what Bernasconi calls "an unstated bias toward what...might be called the 'virtues of the philosopher'."[61] For that ontic ideal reflects an ethics of philosophy, those motives, collected by Husserl under the heading of the philosopher's "ultimate self-responsibility," that lead to the insistence on "phenomenological seeing" itself. Thus even if phenomenology cannot provide a systematic foundational science, the phenomenological concept of ground has a distinct—*though ethical*—priority over the "adventure" of metaphysical cosmology, theology, and psychology.

It should be emphasized that Heidegger did not consistently understand metontology this way; at least during his metaphysical decade he remained seduced by a kind of dialectical illusion. Faced with the phenomenological encounter with the nothing—with the fact that ontic grounds for the whole give out—he did not stay within the ethical space of phenomenological reasoning but believed instead that the finitude of thinking demanded anchor in ontic political and historical affairs, "decision" about the "meaning" of *das Seiende im Ganzen*. To this extent, Habermas is right that Heidegger transformed the transcendental philosophy of *Being and Time* into an inflated historicism and decisionism, something like a worldview.[62] The notorious "political engagement" would thus be a consequence not of the phenomenology of *Being and Time*, but of Heidegger's conflation of the ethical ground of thinking with the ontic involvements of the thinker.

60 J. L. Austin, "Other Minds," *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 66.

61 Bernasconi, "'The Double Concept of Philosophy'," p. 37.

62 Jürgen Habermas, "Martin Heidegger—Werk und Weltanschauung," *Texte und Kontexte* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), p. 58.



But one ought not to agree entirely with Habermas's further claim that, after his metaphysical decade, Heidegger retreated ever more into a mythical self-indemnification. It took Heidegger a decade to realize that there could be no *Umschlag* from ontology to metontology, that phenomenological grounds needed no supplement from metaphysics, or politics either. Though Heidegger never got so far as to see that the ontic ground of ontology is exclusively ethical,[63] his later work no longer makes any appeal to metontology, or to a metaphysical ground. Rather, in the midst of many different motives (some of them perhaps suspect), one finds Heidegger engaged in a phenomenological project of getting back to the *ground of metaphysics* itself in order to confront the metaphysical way of thinking which "represents" beings as a whole.[64] Rather than follow the fruitless path toward worldview formation—a path that confuses being (meaning) with beings, phenomenological with ontic grounds—Heidegger tries to think the "truth of being," to "experience" (i.e., bring to phenomenological evidence) that which, in allowing access to beings, conceals itself. To overcome metaphysics in this way is not to reject philosophical reflection on nature but merely to deny that phenomenology (or *Denken*) can be contextually grounded as a being among beings.[65] If preserving the radical impulse of phenomenology thus requires rejecting the claims of metaphysics, the demise of *Being and Time*, its end, was only the end of the inconsistency still infecting its concept of philosophical reason-giving. Paraphrasing Jacobi, then, Heidegger might well say that "I need the assumption of phenomenology to get into metaphysics, but with this assumption it is not possible for me to remain in it."[66]

63 It should be obvious that this paper has not tried to provide sufficient argument for this claim about an ethical ground.

64 See, for example, the 1949 "Einleitung Zu: 'Was ist Metaphysik?' Der Rückgang in den Grund der Metaphysik," *Wegmarken*, pp. 361–377.

65 Thus I agree with McNeill, "Metaphysics, Fundamental Ontology," p. 78, that the later Heidegger has "no need" of metontology and does not thematize "'beings' as such, but, for example, people, things, and nature"—but I would say that this sort of inquiry ("*thoroughly* existentiell" but not an "objectification") is nothing but the practice of phenomenological seeing freed from an "inappropriate concern with 'science' and 'research'."

66 I would like to thank Charles Guignon for helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper. I would also like to thank *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*'s anonymous referee for forcing me to clarify my argument at crucial points.

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